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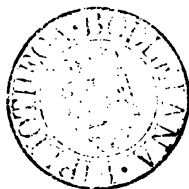
INSTRUCTIONS
IN THE
DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE
OF
CHRISTIANITY,
INTENDED CHIEFLY AS AN INTRODUCTION
TO CONFIRMATION.

BY GEORGE EDWARD LYNCH COTTON, M.A.
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THIRD EDITION.

LONDON :
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.
1853.

138. d. 177.



LONDON :
SPOTTISWOODES and SHAW,
New-street-Square.

1 TIM. vi. 11—16.

11. But thou, O man of God . . . follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

12. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

13. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession :

14. That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ ;

15. Which in His time He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords ;

16. Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto ; whom no man hath seen, nor can see ; to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

PREFACE.

THE following pages are principally designed as an attempt to supply the want of a Manual, containing such instruction in the principles of Christianity, as may be fitted for young persons of the educated classes who are of an age to be confirmed. Books on the subject of Confirmation have generally been written by parochial clergymen, and are therefore in their style and matter chiefly adapted to the minds of those with whom such clergymen have most intercourse, the children of the poor. But it has been felt by many persons engaged in the work of education, that something in a different tone is wanted for the use of those who have received a higher course of instruction than they. I do not mean to *assert that the truths which Christ's Gospel reveals to the rich differ from those which*

makes known to the poor, or that His ministers ought to come to any class of society "with excellency of speech and of wisdom, declaring unto them the testimony of God," instead of "knowing nothing among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified;" but we may at least follow the precedent set by St. Paul, who adopted a totally different style of argument, when addressing the curious and educated Athenians, from that which he used when he was speaking to a congregation of Jews, or expounding the truths of Christianity to the unlearned and ignorant.

The book begins with a short explanation of Confirmation itself, which is followed by a series of chapters on the different heads treated of in the Church Catechism; and the whole concludes with a very short sketch of the grounds on which Christianity claims to be considered a divine revelation, intended to lead the student to trains of thought which are developed in larger treatises. The chapters on the Catechism would be of more *injury than benefit* to a young reader, if they *were so used* as to supersede oral instruction.

A book can rarely make such an impression on the heart as is produced by the teaching of a true and Christian friend; and it is impossible in a treatise like this to give explanations of the different minute points which suggest difficulties to different persons, and for which the help of a teacher whom they can freely question, is quite necessary. Such explanations therefore are not attempted; the leading facts of each subject are stated and illustrated; and the details left to be imparted in a surer and more beneficial way. Thus, in the chapter on the Creed, nothing will be found but a short account of the doctrine of the Trinity, and those truths which flow immediately from it. Each chapter is followed by a prayer, connected with the subject just discussed; and at the end of each, except the first, is a collection of passages from Scripture, on which the statements contained in the chapter are founded. It is thought that the book may be profitably used in the following way. Notice of a Confirmation is generally given at least five or six weeks before the rite is administered. *Let a candidate, then, read one or two chap*

ters carefully every Sunday, and during the week let him use the forms of prayer at the end of the chapters which he has read, or rather let him take those prayers as the model and subject-matter of a part of his own devotions, instead of using the exact words. And further, he should choose the parts of the Bible marked out for him as those to which during that week he directs his attention. For as it is hoped that no one will offer himself for Confirmation without feeling the duty, not only of constant prayer, but also of daily religious reading, so it cannot but be useful that what he reads during the period of preparation shall bear upon the great subject towards which his mind ought so earnestly to be directed.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

MEANING AND INTENT OF CONFIRMATION.—Confirmation represents Baptism.—Its external effects.—It is a time for teaching.—Origin of Confirmation.—Its connection with the practice of the Apostles.—Its difference from their practice.—Ancient and Modern Evidences compared.—Why we are bound to be confirmed.—Origin of our responsibility.—Confirmation must be voluntary.—Proper preparation for it.—Prayer that we may worthily partake in the Rite.—Questions on Chapter I. - - - - - Page 1

CHAPTER II.

THE BAPTISMAL VOW. PART I.—Why we are bound to serve God.—Original Sin and Original Righteousness.—Different parts of the Baptismal Rite.—We cannot escape from our duty to God.—Three classes of Temptations.—Of the World.—Of the Flesh.—Of the Devil.—Our faults are sins in God's sight.—Necessity of Repentance.—Prayer for forgiveness and help.—Passages of Scripture.—Our Lord's Temptations.—Questions on Chapter II. - - - - - 16

CHAPTER III.

THE BAPTISMAL VOW. PART II.—The Creed.—God revealed in the Trinity.—We cannot know God, except in Christ.—Christ's Incarnation, Atonement, Resur-

tion, present Life, Judgment.—Mission of the Holy Ghost.—Duties resulting from our belief in the Holy Trinity.—Prayer for an increase of Faith and Love.—Passages of Scripture.—Questions on Chapter III. - - - - Page 33

CHAPTER IV.

THE BAPTISMAL VOW. PART III.—The Ten Commandments.—Spirit of the Commandments.—We are justified by Faith, from which fact springs a Holiness higher than mere Obedience, because it arises from Love, and makes our Duty our Happiness.—These Principles of Action are formed and aided by the Spirit.—Signs of His Presence.—Judgment according to our works.—Obstacles to Holiness, arising from Selfishness, Vanity, Carelessness, Bad Temper, Weakness.—How we must resist them all.—Prayer that we may desire to do God's Will.—Questions on Chapter IV. - - 47

CHAPTER V.

PRAYER.—God hears our prayers.—Objection answered.—How to pray without ceasing.—Spirit in which we are allowed to pray for temporal blessings.—St. Paul's "Thorn in the flesh."—Christ's prayer in the garden.—Prayers for Holiness, and Self-knowledge, that we may see how our sins are connected.—Signs of the Spirit's presence.—Danger of quenching His suggestions.—Intercessory Prayer.—Explanation of the Lord's Prayer, as a model for other prayers.—Prayer for God's guidance in our Devotions.—Passages of Scripture.—Questions on Chapter V. - - 67

CHAPTER VI.

BAPTISM.—Origin of Baptism.—Its connection with the promise of the Holy Ghost.—Baptism a new Birth, as bringing us into relation with God in Christ through

the Spirit. — Reasons for Infant Baptism. — Loss of Baptismal privileges. — We must all undergo the Death unto Sin. — Baptism changes not our hearts, but our state. — The English Baptismal Service. — Baptism a bond of union. — Summary of Baptismal privileges. — Prayer for their continuance. — Passages of Scripture. — Immersion and Sprinkling. — Questions on Chapter VI. - - - - Page 88

CHAPTER VII.

THE LORD'S SUPPER. — Our Lord's discourse in John VI. — The Lord's Supper a commemoration of Christ's death, and a means of feeding on Him. — Duty of receiving it. — It is a Holy Communion with each other through Christ. — By daily feeding on Christ we shall feel less able to sin. — The Communion not an end, but a means. — Prayer for a worthy Participation in Christ's Communion. — Passages of Scripture. — Questions on Chapter VII. - - - - 107

CHAPTER VIII.

REASONS FOR BELIEVING. — The testimony of conscience and the condition of the heathen world, prove the necessity of a Revelation from God to man. — Christianity satisfies our wants. — External evidence. — Effects of Christianity. — Manner of its propagation. — Requisites for a Revelation to be acknowledged as divine. — Proofs of Christ's Resurrection. — Persecution of the first disciples. — Internal marks of genuineness in the New Testament. — Manner in which the Scriptures have been transmitted to us. — The Old Testament. — Unity of design observable in Scripture. — Its harmony with the voice of nature. — Summary and character of Christian evidence. — The greatest proof is, the fact that the Gospel only makes us holy. — Prayer for increased devotion to Christ's Religion. — Passages of Scripture bearing on evidence. — Questions on Chapter VIII. - 124

CONCLUSION.

General means of Improvement. — Prayer, Communion,
Bible, Sunday, Books, Friends, Self-Examination, Alms-
giving, Kindness to the Poor, Feeling of Duty and
Earnestness, of the reality of Redemption, and our need
of a Saviour - - - - Page 155

PRACTICE AND DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

MEANING AND INTENT OF CONFIRMATION.

I. CONFIRMATION is a rite which may be considered to have three objects. *First*,—It is intended to be to the persons who receive it a new beginning as it were of their Christian life, a marked and solemn crisis in their history, which shall bring vividly before them the fact, that “old things are passed away to them, and all things become new ;”^a that, although, when they were children, they thought as children, they spake as children, they

^a 2 Cor. v. 17.

2 *Confirmation represents Baptism.*

understood as children, yet that now, when they have entered upon their Christian manhood, "they should put away childish things."^b Thus it consciously represents to them their baptism: the duties to which Christ's Redemption has pledged them, are now solemnly undertaken by them, as they were at their baptism undertaken for them; "they ratify and confirm their vows in their own persons," voluntarily declaring that they must never be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, but must manfully fight under His banner, and continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants, unto their lives' end.^c *Secondly*, it is also intended to have an external effect on those who partake of it; that is, an effect produced, not by a mere impression made upon their own minds, but by God's grace given to them in answer to the prayers of others. The blessing which the Bishop pronounces over those whom he confirms, is, in fact, a prayer addressed to God for them, by one of the chief officers of the Christian Church. The prayers of the congregation, in whose presence

^b *1 Cor. xiii. 11.*

^c *Baptismal Service.*

the Confirmation takes place, are met by the promise, that if only two agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them by their Father who is in heaven.^d But besides these solemn and public prayers, no one can doubt that every candidate for Confirmation, for a long period before the administration of the rite, is the object of special prayer from all those who love him or are interested in his everlasting welfare. God will not reject the supplications of parents, of brothers, of relations, teachers, and friends, in behalf of one whom His Son has died to save, and who has been admitted by baptism into the number of His chosen. Such intercessions will bring down His Holy Spirit into the heart of him for whom they are offered, and if that Spirit cannot do mighty works in that heart, it will be on account of its own unbelief^e, and not because God is slack concerning His promises. *Thirdly*, — Confirmation is intended to furnish a suitable period in the life of every baptized person, at which their lawful spiri-

^d Matt. xviii. 19^e Matt. xiii. 58, xvii. 20.

tual guides may have an opportunity of instructing them more fully and particularly than usual, in the principles of Christ's religion.

It will be desirable, first, to give a short sketch of the origin and history of Confirmation itself, and then to say a few words on each of its three objects.

II. The imposition of hands has, from the earliest times, been adopted as a form of blessing, that is, of presenting a person in prayer to God. To *bless* any one is to pray for him, the word *blessing* being particularly applied to the intercession of those, who from their age, or office, or connection, either natural or spiritual, with the person whom they bless, have, so to speak, a special reason to believe that God will hear and respect their prayer. Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh by laying his hands upon them and praying for them^f, and young children were brought to our Lord, that he might put His hands upon them and bless them.^g So also we find, that after the Ascension, the practice

^f Gen. xlviii. 14.

^g Matt. xix. 13.

was continued by the Apostles, (1) as a form of inauguration into office; (2) as a means of working miraculous cures according to Christ's promise^h; and (3), — from which our rite of Confirmation is imitated, — as part of a ceremony which called down on baptized persons the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost. There are two places, in particular, in the Acts, which furnish us, as it were, with the pattern of Confirmation. *First*, — “When the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet He was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”ⁱ From what follows, it is plain, that the presence of the Holy Ghost was *visibly manifested* by means of the miracles worked by those who received Him, since Simon Magus immediately offered money to obtain the same

^h Acts, vi. 6. xiii. 3. Mark, xvi. 18.

ⁱ Acts, viii. 14.

gift. *Secondly*, — We read of certain disciples at Ephesus, that when, after their Baptism “Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied.”^k In this case, therefore, as in the former, visible miraculous effects followed the imposition of hands, and as, in the first days of the Church, miraculous works of ~~mercy~~ mercy were permitted to exist as an evidence of the truth of Christianity, it is plain that in this, its earliest form, Confirmation was of a great and peculiar importance, since its effects afforded to the new convert the clearest proof possible, that he had become a member of a divinely instituted society. Hence we are not surprised to find it classed with Baptism, and the doctrines of the Resurrection and the last Judgment, as we do in the Epistle to the Hebrews.^l But when Christianity had been once launched into the world, with the aid of these miraculous evidences to its truth, it was no longer necessary for God to interrupt the ordinary course of his providence; and miracles were with-

^k *Acts*, xix. 6, 6.

^l *Heb.* vi. 2.

drawn from the Church. The time at which this took place, has been much disputed. As we pass from the New Testament, to the writings of Christian authors who immediately followed the Apostles, powers strictly miraculous appear gradually to fade away into the ordinary blessings and answers promised to faithful prayer in every age of the Church. Some have maintained that, though the Apostles had the power of transmitting miraculous gifts to those upon whom they laid their hands, yet these had no authority to confer them upon others, so that, with the first generation after the Apostles, miracles would disappear. However this may be, it is plain that, as soon as these miraculous powers were withdrawn, the ceremony of Confirmation, in its original sense, would be necessarily abolished also. But another Confirmation has with great propriety taken its place, bearing in all respects a close analogy to the Apostolical Confirmation upon which it is modelled.

III. The faith of Christians of the present day, is based, not on the sight of miraculous signs, but on reasons of various kinds. In

the early stages of Christianity, it is possible for persons to doubt the existence of God's Spirit, who felt themselves impelled by Him to prophesy and speak with authority. When a man was so far moved by the power of Almighty power and infinite goodness which is manifested in the history of Christ, Lord, as to resolve to accept Him as his Saviour, to repent of past sin, and to be baptized into His Name, his faith was confirmed to him, by the extraordinary workings of God's Spirit which enabled him to perform miracles. Now, it would not be good for us if our faith should rest on proofs of this kind of character. We must remember that in the first age of Christianity the evidence was, in other respects, far weaker than at present. The earliest converts received the Gospel as a new and untried system, as one which has stood the test of time and changed the history of the world. It was mercifully ordered that this deficient evidence for its truth should be supplied by miraculous testimony. But when we have *enough to investigate the grounds*

faith, to understand why we are Christians, and to give a reason of the hope which is in us^m, then we are confirmed in our religion by arguments of a different kind, by evidence drawn partly from the history of the past, but chiefly from the testimony of our own consciences, enlightened and instructed as they ought to be, when we have passed our childhood, not as heathens, but as baptized Christians. And further, as the Sacrament of Baptism is now administered to us in our infancy, the ceremony of Confirmation, which was formerly simultaneous with it, is separated from it; and though the χειροθεσία, or imposition of hands, is retained, in imitation of the Apostolic practice, its meaning has ceased to be the same. We are confirmed in our Christian faith, not by the miraculous signs conferred by the χειροθεσία of the Apostles, but by the silent conviction of our own minds and hearts, the blessing of the Bishop, the teaching of Christ's ministers, the prayers offered up by ourselves and others, and at the same time we confirm our own

^m 1 Peter, iii. 15.

10 *Why we are bound to be confirmed.*

baptismal engagements, professing our desire to render to God a reasonable service, and to continue in that faith in which we have been instructed.

IV. The ceremony which, as it were, concentrates and represents all these grounds and means of conviction, is called Confirmation, being, in fact, the legitimate representative of the apostolic *χειροθεσία*, altered and adapted to the present circumstances of the Church. And by the authority of the Church it has been ordered that this Confirmation should supply the place of the other. Therefore, though not enjoined in Scripture, it is based upon a Scriptural analogy, has been handed down as a Church ordinance from generation to generation, continued by the Church of England at the Reformation, and is a ceremony most eminently calculated, if our own evil hearts do not exclude us from its benefits, to draw down upon us the blessing of God, and the strengthening influence of His Holy Spirit.

V. A few words may be necessary here, as a warning against the foolish error, now happily almost exploded, by which some have *fancied that before their Confirmation, they*

were not responsible for their sins. For while Confirmation is only an ordinance of the Church to which we belong, we are bound to the practice of holiness by the very fact of our creation, for at our birth we have a conscience given us, which commands us to serve God, whose creatures we are. The means of becoming holy, that is, the possession of the Spirit of God, is granted to all persons admitted into the Christian covenant, and must be used by every one as soon as his faculties are sufficiently developed. Confirmation, indeed, in one sense, increases our responsibility, because those who have been confirmed are not only under an obligation to do right, but have themselves declared publicly that they know it; but it would be monstrous to imagine that an institution of the Church could suspend for fifteen or sixteen years of our lives, the performance of duties to which we are bound by the higher sanctions of our consciences, and of God's revealed commands, and to which we should have been bound, if He had never instituted His Church at all. Still, to refuse to be *confirmed*, because our responsibility is there-

by increased, would be wrong, not merely ~~as~~ involving an act of disobedience to the Church of which we are members, in a matter in which its right over us is clear, but as implying that we are unwilling to devote ourselves to God's service by every possible obligation, and therefore that we have a lurking wish to continue in sin. Only it is necessary that our Confirmation should be a perfectly voluntary act, for in this its very essence may be said to consist. Even the wishes of parents, though of course of the greatest weight, are not sufficient to determine a boy to come to Confirmation, unless he is himself willing and desirous to do so; for to declare that we ratify and confirm our baptismal vows, not because we are ourselves convinced of the propriety of so confirming them, but because others have told us that it is right, is to deny the very meaning of Confirmation, as the act by virtue of which we visibly and consciously pass from spiritual childhood to spiritual manhood.

VI. Meantime, as no error can be more fatal to a candidate for Confirmation, than

to imagine that the preparation required for it is concerned entirely or chiefly with the intellect, instead of having its principal seat in the heart, we will pause here, and request every one who uses this book, to offer up, with the most earnest devotion, a prayer to God, that the blessings which Confirmation offers to him may be largely poured upon him by the influence of the Holy Ghost. To this end a form has been provided; but it will be better for him to adopt it rather as a guide and model for his devotions, than as furnishing the exact words in which he ought to pray. And he will unite with it an earnest entreaty for deliverance from those special sins and temptations which most easily beset him, and which can be fully known to no one except himself, and Him in whose sight all things are naked and open, and whose word is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.ⁿ

ⁿ Heb. iv. 12.

PRAYER THAT WE MAY WORTHILY PAR-
TAKE IN THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

O ALMIGHTY God and Heavenly Father, I desire now to draw near to Thee in an especial manner, and humbly to beg for Thy blessing on the step which I am about to take. Lord, I repent of all the sins of my childhood, my selfishness and carelessness, my little love for Thee and Jesus Christ Thy Son, my absorbing interest in present gratification, and inattention to the concerns of that awful Future which is to last for ever. Pardon me, O Father, for what is past. I approach Thee in prayer, not in my own name, nor do I ask for forgiveness for my own sake, but I come to Thee in the Name and through the Blood of Christ, who died for me. I devote to Thee, through Him, my body, soul, and spirit; and I desire to consecrate to Thy service every wish, and thought, and feeling. O Lord, receive me into the arms of Thy mercy, and make me truly and entirely Thine. Pour into my *heart* Thy blessed Spirit; make my Con-

firmation the beginning of a new life, spent wholly in Thy faith and fear, and may I have grace now to put away childish things, and offer to thee, my Father, a true and reasonable service, for the sake and through the help of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I.

1. What are the three objects of Confirmation ?
2. What is expressed by the ceremony of the *imposition of hands* ? Give instances of its use, (1) from the Old Testament, (2) from the New.
3. What evidence to the truth of the Gospel have we, which the first converts had not ; and what had they, which we have not ?
4. Show, from the answer to the last question, how our Confirmation differs from the Apostolic *χειροθεσία*.
5. In virtue of what authority is Confirmation binding upon us ?
6. Why is Confirmation now separated from Baptism ?
7. Why are we responsible for our sins before Confirmation ?
8. In what sense does Confirmation increase our responsibility ?
9. Show that it would be wrong to wish not to be confirmed.

CHAPTER II.

THE BAPTISMAL VOW.—PART I.

I. THE vow made in our name at our Baptism, and which at Confirmation we ourselves confirm and ratify, consists of three parts—to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, to believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and to keep the commandments of God. Repentance, Faith, and Holiness, are, in short, the three parts of the Christian life, which correspond respectively to the three parts of the baptismal vow.

II. Strictly speaking, it is quite true that no one can be bound by a promise made for him by another, especially at a period of his life when he was himself perfectly unconscious that the promise was made. Therefore it is impossible to found our obligation to serve God on the mere fact that this promise has been made. But it is not *necessary to attempt* to do so; for many true

grounds can be mentioned on which the obligation rests, and at the same time the vow itself is capable of a satisfactory explanation.

III. In the first place, every one is bound to love and serve God by the fact of his creation, for reasons similar to those for which every child is bound to love and serve his earthly parents. We are God's children. In each of us He has implanted that idea of duty, which makes known to us that there are certain things which we ought to do, and others which we ought to avoid; on each of us He has bestowed a conscience to pass judgment on our several actions. But besides all this, the fact of our having partaken of the *sacrament* of Baptism—without reference to the *vow* there made for us—imposes an additional obligation in the following way.

IV. We are born with a sinful nature, and come into the world in a state of alienation from God. This is not only repeatedly stated in Scripture, but is taught us by our own experience, and by the history of the whole world. Our will does not, and of *itself* cannot, obey God's law. Hence if we

18 *Original Sin and original Righteousness.*

were left to ourselves, we should assuredly grow up His enemies. But the Scripture has revealed to us, what we could not discover from experience, that man's nature is not essentially sinful ; that he was originally created pure and holy and in God's own image, and therefore that we are capable of restoration. It tells us, moreover, that God, in His mercy and love to us, offers to deliver us from our lost and sinful condition, and restore us to that connection with Himself, which would have been our natural privilege as His children, if sin had not entered into the world and defiled the whole of our race. He promises to receive us as His own, and give to us the enjoyment of everlasting happiness, if we will, on our parts, promise to renounce those sins which are originally foreign to our nature, but have become part of it. As soon as we are born, our natural guardians desire to bring us into the participation of so great a blessing, and therefore present us to God according to His invitation, and in the manner which He has enjoined, by causing us to be baptized in the *name of the Father and of the Son and of*

the Holy Ghost. This is all that is absolutely essential to Baptism, since it is all that Christ Himself has commanded. But in order to give additional solemnity to the celebration of this Sacrament, and to bear perpetual witness to the truth, that if God accepts us and admits us to the blessings of Christianity, we are bound to love Him and to serve Him to the utmost of our power, the Church has ordained that, when we are baptized, sureties should promise that we will fulfil our side of the compact, and undertake that we shall be taught to know our duty and the nature of the mercies which God has bestowed upon us. They promise, in our name, that we will renounce certain evil things, believe certain true things, perform certain good things. But this vow cannot in itself bind us, till we take it upon ourselves at our Confirmation, and therefore, when made by our sponsors at Baptism it can only be considered as a public declaration that, as beings born in sin, but now reconciled to God, and admitted to be citizens of that kingdom which Christ founded upon earth, we are bound to love Him and serve Him

20 *We cannot escape from our duty to*

with all our hearts; and that unless we consecrate our lives to His glory, we have no claim upon His mercy, or the privilege to which our Baptism admits us. Because Christ has died for us, and redeemed us, and made us God's children, therefore we are bound to lead holy lives, and of this fact the vow made by our sponsors is a public declaration.

V. But it is plain, from what has been said before, that we could not escape from our duties to God, even by renouncing the privileges of our Baptism, and declaring ourselves indifferent to His mercies towards us. For then we should still be compelled to fall back on our original obligation to Him who gave us birth. A child might feel no great interest in the pleasures and amusements which his earthly parents prepared for him, but could never be exempted from the love and duty which he owes them, by the original constitution of his nature. So, too, in the case of our relation to our heavenly Father, even if it were conceivable that a person should declare himself indifferent to *the choice between heaven and hell*, and

therefore were to claim exemption from his baptismal vows, still there would remain the yet earlier tie which connects him to God, revealed to him by his conscience and his reason. If, therefore, he refuses to recognise God as his reconciled Father, he cannot help acknowledging Him as his offended Master. He may renounce the liberty of a son, but cannot deliver himself from the bondage of a slave.

VI. In the sense above explained, then, it was promised for us at our Baptism that we should repent of and renounce three classes of sins—those suggested by the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; that is, it was declared that it is our duty to renounce them, and that unless we do so we have no claim to the blessings of Christian Redemption, and cease to be citizens of the kingdom which Christ established among men, to which He has promised such great and glorious privileges both here and hereafter, and of which the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, are the three great enemies. Now it is most desirable for us really to understand *what is meant by these words, and not to*

be led astray by any vagueness of language, lest we should fail to see how distinctly and constantly applicable this vow is to our own daily life. The temptations of the World, then, are all those things which incline us to love this earth better than heaven; of the Flesh, those which lead us to prefer the good of our perishing bodies to that of our immortal souls; of the Devil, those which suggest to us that we should rather obey the impulses of our own evil tempers, than seek to direct our hearts and minds in all things according to the will of Christ.

VII. The temptations of the World incline us to such sins as those of yielding ourselves up immoderately to amusement, of adopting the low principles and maxims which we hear from those around us, of doing what we feel to be wrong, in order to win the approbation of people who can in any respect improve our worldly condition, or to whom circumstances have given influence over us. It is plain that the young are as liable to yield to these as the old, though the temptations will be presented to *them in a somewhat different form.* Boys

at a public school, for instance, are manifestly surrounded by a world which countenances and encourages opinions clearly unchristian. Such are the notions that zealous industry is to be discouraged, and indicates a want of proper spirit and social feeling; that lying to a master is often allowable, and sometimes necessary; that swearing is excusable, if caused by violent passion; that good nature is a quality sufficient to atone for the absence of a really Christian character; and many others, which will not stand the test of God's Holy Word. These opinions are sometimes adopted by persons who once would have allowed them to be wrong, merely because they choose to yield themselves up to the spirit and public feeling of the place in which they live, without making any effort against it for the sake of Christ, or rather without troubling themselves to think about the matter. In other cases, though the opinions may not be distinctly adopted and realised, yet the practices to which they lead are followed, because it is inconvenient not to do so; because to resist *them* would be to incur dislike; because, in

short, to use the language of Scripture, boys do not choose rather to suffer the reproach of Christ, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.^o Such is one class of the sins which at our Baptism we promised to renounce; and by which boys as completely violate God's will, as men do when they yield to ambition, or adopt the common worldly opinions which sanction duelling and other evil practices.

VIII. We have promised to renounce the temptations of the Flesh. This also is an expression which includes sins to which we are every day exposed; nay, the pleasures which we probably most keenly enjoy. Such are the gratifications of eating and drinking, and idleness, and general selfishness; the indulgence of impure thoughts, the desire of doing every thing, whether right or wrong, which gratifies our bodily inclinations.

IX. It is difficult accurately to distinguish the temptations of the Devil from the dangers which have just been mentioned, because he is the author of all evil, and therefore every kind of sin is in fact suggested by him. But

^o Heb. xi. 25, 26.

those temptations which do not seem properly to belong to the World or the Flesh are peculiarly his, such as those of ill temper, sulkiness, vanity and pride, meanness, swearing, blasphemy, other wicked talking, and especially lying. The latter sin is particularly declared to be his; and we should remember that to renounce it, is stated by St. Paul to be the very first act of the Christian life, the test which decides the question whether a person who professes Christ's religion has really embraced it or no. "Lie not one to another," he says, "*seeing ye have put off the old man* with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."^p If then we continue to indulge in falsehood, St. Paul declares that we have not put on the new man, that is, have not really become Christians at all.

X. Such is a brief enumeration of the matters contained in the first part of our baptismal vow. The temptations against which we promise to struggle, are such as

^p Col. iii. 9.

lead to the ordinary faults which we every day committing. Faults they may be in our language ; but in God's view they are sins. How He regards them, every page of the Old Testament teaches us. We know the history in the second book of Samuel⁹, that when David committed an action which indicated pride and self-confidence, seventy thousand of the Israelites fell, as an evidence how God abhors such feelings. We have read that when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram^r stirred up a spirit of disobedience against constituted authority, the earth swallowed them up and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto them, and all their goods. We remember the various judgments which fell on the Jewish nation, when they refused to put away their low standard of duty, and their prevalent sins, at the warning voice of the prophets who rose up to reform and rebuke them. By such signs as these did God declare His opinion of sins which we are in the habit of considering as pardonable faults.

⁹ 2 Sam. xxiv. 10.

^r Numbers, xvi. 32.

XI. When we read such histories as these, and remember the daily occurrences of our own lives, we might well fall into positive despair. And if our baptismal vow consisted in nothing but a promise to renounce the temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, it would be impious for us voluntarily to renew and confirm a promise which it would be quite impossible for us to keep. But the second part of our vow, that by which we promise to believe all the articles of the Christian Faith, furnishes us with the means by which we may observe the first and third. It teaches us that, if we choose, we can be made partakers of a system which will gradually deliver us from sin. In the mean time, the mere recollection that we have, for fifteen or sixteen years, been solemnly bound to observe every thing contained in this promise, that God has noted every violation of it, and that every time we have broken it, we have shown our ingratitude to Christ our Saviour, should fill us with penitent and humble thoughts, and add fervency to our prayers for mercy and deliverance. The punishments for our sins,

unlike those which befel the Jews, are not inflicted in this world, but are reserved for a more terrible eternity. Let no one, then, think of this first part of his baptismal vow, without humbly asking God to pardon his many violations of it, and to save him from the sin of continuing to break it, after he has himself voluntarily renewed and confirmed it.

A PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS AND HELP.

O ALMIGHTY God, I come before Thee with fear and trembling, as a miserable sinner, for I have spent my past life with too little regard to Thy will, and to the conditions which I must fulfil, if I am to remain thy child, and a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Lord, I have yielded to the temptations of the World, by shaping my conduct according to its precepts, and desiring above all things its favours and its comforts; I have encouraged the sinful lusts of the Flesh, by my selfish desire to make all things minister to my enjoyments; I have given way to the sugges-

tions of my soul's enemy, by living on with a temper unchastened and unchecked, and but weak attempts to foster and encourage any good inclinations. O Lord, spare me and forgive me ; turn me from this miserable bondage to that perfect freedom in Thy service to which my Baptism admitted me ; take not from me the blessings which Thou givest in and through Thy Son. Confirm me in all good and holy resolutions, increase in me the knowledge of my duty and the tenderness of my conscience, and give me Thy Holy Spirit to help me in my infirmities. Enable me now at last really to renounce the Devil and all his works, and always to cleave steadfastly to my Saviour. May all carnal affections die in me, and all things belonging to the Spirit live and grow in me, till I come at last to that everlasting kingdom, which thou hast promised to those who unfeignedly love Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The following passages of Scripture may be usefully read and thought over, in connection with the preceding chapter :—

Psalm li., to teach us the kind of *sorrow* which our penitence should produce *in* L. Eph. iv. 20—32., as enumerating *many* the sins against which we are *especially* pledged; 1 John, ii. 15—17., Gal. v. 19—21; John, viii. 44., which contain, respectively, examples of the three classes of temptations mentioned in the Baptismal Service; and Matt. iv. 1—11., Luke, iv. 1—13., compared with Heb. iv. 12—16., to show us how they may be resisted. We shall observe, that the first of our Lord's temptations, taking them in St. Luke's order, was a temptation of the Flesh, the second of the World, the third of the Devil; so that when the passage in the Hebrews assures us that Christ was *in all points* tempted like as we are, it implies, that each of His three temptations affords a specimen of one of the three classes of dangers against which we are called upon to struggle, and that the facts recorded in the gospels should be to us a proof that Christ can sympathise with us, and help us in them all.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II.

1. What are the three parts of the baptismal vow?
2. What three parts of the Christian life correspond to them respectively?
3. Can it be said that we are bound to serve God, *because our Sponsors promised* that we should do so?
4. What is the original tie which binds us to God?
5. How do we know that our nature is sinful?
6. What has Scripture told us about the original constitution of our nature, which we could not have known otherwise?
7. What offers from God does Scripture reveal to us?
8. What part of the baptismal ceremony was instituted by Christ?
9. What is the other part of it, and by whom instituted?
10. In what sense do our Godfathers and Godmothers make a promise in our name?
11. Could we escape from our duties to God by renouncing our Baptism?
12. Distinguish between the temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and give instances of each.
13. What was the sin of David in numbering the people?
14. What was the sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram?
15. What was the sin of the Israelites against the prophets?

16. What may we infer from these facts

17. What difference is there between the punishments inflicted on our sins, and those by which Jews were visited?

18. Show how our Lord's temptations illustrate the first part of the Baptismal vow.

19. What may we conclude from a passage on this subject in the Epistle to the Hebrews?

CHAPTER III.

THE BAPTISMAL VOW. — PART II.

The Creed.

I. THE second part of the Baptismal Vow, to believe the articles of the Christian faith, binds us to an acceptance of that revelation, of which the shortest summary is contained in the Apostles' Creed. It is needless to enter into all the articles of this formulary of our faith, of which many are a mere statement of historical facts. It will be better to say a few words on that short explanation of its whole purport, contained in the answer which the Catechism gives to the question, — “What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of thy belief?” viz. — That we learn to believe in God the Father who made us, God the Son who redeemed us, and God the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us. It is here declared that the essence of the Christian

faith consists in a belief in the Trinity, and this point requires a little explanation.

II. The word Trinity does not occur anywhere in Scripture, but was invented by the early writers of the Church, to include in one short expression a number of facts scattered up and down many parts of the Bible, but of which the great practical result is the lesson, that religion must be made to influence our daily life, and enter into all our thoughts and occupations. For in the Trinity, God is revealed to us in a manner in which we can apply our knowledge of His existence to our own spiritual use and benefit. Without Christianity, our general idea of God would be merely that of an Almighty Spirit, wholly removed from the sphere of human thoughts and feelings, too great to enter into our wants and weaknesses, dwelling in unapproachable light, and separated from us by a barrier altogether impassable. Sometimes indeed the contrivances for our comfort, which we see in the arrangement of the physical creation, might lead us to hope that God loved us. Yet we know too well from history, how *little practical* comfort can be derived from

such considerations, how hard the wisest men of old found it "to feel after Him and find Him" by these traces of His presence, how far the best of them were from any conception of Him, at all resembling that which Christianity has given us, how utterly alienated from Him were the mass of mankind. With such a view of God as that above described, would be coupled, in any serious mind, most painful thoughts about our own nature and condition. Not only must we be conscious of numerous past sins, but, if we think at all, we must feel that we are perfectly incapable of overcoming them for the future. And then if we had united these feelings merely with the consciousness that we are in the hands of a God of entire and absolute holiness, not only of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, but also incapable of sympathising with temptation, Whose will we have constantly outraged, and from Whom we feel still further separated by sin, than we are naturally by ignorance and helplessness, what could be the result, except that we must sink either into unbelief or else into *despair*? But Christianity has taught us

that we may yet obtain from God, pardon, and holiness, and everlasting salvation.

III. In the Gospel it is revealed to us that God's essential attribute is love. Impelled by this divine quality, He determined to make Himself known to men, to reconcile them to Himself, to forgive them, to enable them to be holy, to take them to dwell with Him for ever after this life ; — and yet not to abate one tittle of His abhorrence of sin, but rather to display before the eyes of the whole world, how impossible it was for Him to overlook it, or to connect Himself with any being who was not delivered from its curse. To effect all this, there came forth from the bosom of the Father, the Eternal Word, Who hath dwelt with Him for all ages in a union whose nature our faculties cannot conceive, but Who had always been the declaration of God to man, the Mediator by Whom the invisible Creator held communications with His creatures. This *Word*, so called from this very circumstance that He declares the Father's will to man, had created all things, had been the immediate Governor of *the world and all that is in it*, had been

revealed to the Jews as the Lord of their nation, giving them the Law from Sinai, and dwelling within the temple, in the Holy of Holies.^a He now took upon Him human nature, and in the form of a Man came down and lived among us. Thus our first great difficulty is removed; God is no longer incomprehensible, in the same way in which He was before. In one sense, of course, He is entirely so; how He was enabled to do all this, we cannot understand, because we are not of the same nature as He. Neither could one of the lower animals understand what is that power in us which enables us to speak in articulate language. No being can understand another being, with whom he has not a common nature, and therefore, when God

^a The proof of this assertion is too long to be inserted here; it is however, manifest to any one who reads the Old Testament attentively, and compares it with the New, that the LORD who guided and governed the Jews, was the same Word who had created the world, and was afterwards incarnate as Jesus Christ. See for instance, 1 Cor. x. 9., Heb. xi. 26., John i. 11., where the expression, *His own*, plainly refers to the Jews, and shows that they were the people of Christ, no less than of God the Father.

in the person of Christ took our nature upon Him, He enabled us, *so far*, to understand Him. We now can know that He sympathises with our temptations, that He really loves us and desires our everlasting good, that He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities.[†]

IV. But still this Incarnation has only revealed to us yet more vividly the perfect purity of God, and therefore may excite in us a painful doubt whether we, who are so polluted by sin, can ever be admitted to His favour. Therefore, besides having the knowledge of God, it is also necessary for us to be assured that we may be reconciled to Him. As the knowledge of God is given us by the Life of Christ, so reconciliation with God is given us in His Death. We can no longer doubt that sin is hateful, when we see the incarnate God dying as a sacrifice to atone for it. For by this means He reconciles His Father to us. He has taken upon Himself all our sins, and thus His Father can freely forgive them all, without appearing indifferent to them. Nor can we doubt that they are

[†] Heb. iv. 15.

perfectly atoned for, when we consider who and what He is, who has thus died for them. Thus then is God reconciled, and everlasting glory is promised, to all of us, who place our whole trust in this Saviour, who have a lively faith in His Death as the means of our deliverance, in His Resurrection as the pledge of ours, in His present existence as of One who can hear our prayers and help us in our infirmities, and in His future return to demand an account of all our actions ; and who therefore desire, to the utmost of their ability, to love Him and serve Him in all things.

V. But even yet the work of our restoration to God's likeness is incomplete. By Christ's Incarnation, Atonement, and Resurrection, we obtain a knowledge of God, a means of reconciliation with Him, an assurance of everlasting life. It is certain that such blessings, if thoroughly believed, must awaken in us a feeling of love ; that this love will manifest itself in a desire to serve Christ, and to be like Him ; but still the work is not finished. We desire what we have no means of accomplishing. For we feel that our nature is corrupt, our powers of turning from

sin to holiness decayed, our natural inclinations constantly rising up, in favour of the evil habits which we promised in our Baptism to renounce. These difficulties are removed by the further revelation that in the Godhead there is yet a Third Person, who is the constant internal support of Christ's people, dwelling in their hearts by a spiritual manner of existence, inclining them and strengthening them to do what is right. This Third Person, — God the Holy Ghost, — dictates to them good thoughts, helps them in their prayers, gives them strength to resist temptation. And this completes the great end of Christ's coming, by imparting to us the means of becoming holy. We know that the Spirit is at once Almighty, and capable of sympathising with all our weakness, because He proceeds from the Father, and also from the Son.*

* Nicene Creed. With regard to this word *proceeding*, it will be enough to give a practical meaning of it, namely, that the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, sent by the Father and the Son alike, to aid us in our struggles, that His help is *procured by our praying* to the Father through the Son, and *from the Son immediately*; and that, therefore, since

VI. If then we really wish to show our faith in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and to receive that comfort and support which so many good men, for so many hundred years, have derived from their belief in it, we must remember that the necessary consequence of such a faith and only true sign of its existence, is a life spent in the devout service of Him, who through His Son, has given to us His Spirit. Such a living and working faith must be kept alive by earnest prayer, aided by continual watchfulness and efforts of our own, that the knowledge of the Father's will, which the Son has brought us, may be the guide of our whole lives; that the crowning mercy of Christ's Death, which has reconciled God to us, may be met on our parts by unceasing efforts to conquer sin, and by a love which inwardly impels us to seek after goodness; and that the help of the Holy Ghost may never be denied to us in consequence of our obstinacy or carelessness, but may con-

he *proceeds* from, and is sent by the Son, His help is the peculiar and promised blessing of all who are admitted into the Christian covenant, and embrace the *scheme of salvation* which the Son has revealed to us.

stantly purify our hearts, and produce abundant fruit of holiness and Christian zeal.

A PRAYER FOR AN INCREASE OF FAITH
AND LOVE.

O ALMIGHTY and All-merciful Father, Who hast so graciously spared me, and remitted the punishment which my sins deserve, give to me a spirit of hearty love to Thee, and enable me to feel that I am in truth Thy reconciled child. Save me from the folly and wickedness of separating myself from Thy mercies, and cutting myself off by sin from the communion of Thy chosen. Increase and strengthen in me every good disposition, and so order by Thy providence every event which happens to me in this world, that all its changes and chances may issue in the furtherance of my everlasting salvation, through Jesus Christ my Saviour.

O most blessed Lord Jesus Christ, Who hast declared Thyself to be my Friend, my Saviour and my Brother, send Thy Spirit to keep alive in me Thy faith, and enable me to *feel and know* in my inmost heart, that Thou

art ever present with me, helping and guiding me when I try to follow Thee, pitying and seeking me even though I go astray as a sheep that is lost. O pardon me for all my past negligence and indifference to Thee; fill me now with the spirit of ardent devotion to thy service; and at the last receive me into that heavenly kingdom, which Thy Blood has purchased for Thy Redeemed.

O Holy Spirit of God and Christ, come down, I beseech Thee, and dwell with me, and make my heart Thy temple. Purify it and cleanse it from every vain imagination, fill it with a faith in those invisible things which Thy Scriptures have revealed to me, and with a true, and humble, and devoted love to Thee, and the Father, and the Son.

O Holy, Everlasting God, Three Persons and One God, preserve and quicken in me that spiritual life which springs from Thy preserving, and redeeming, and sanctifying care; make me daily more pure, more faithful, more earnest, more loving, more deeply anxious to fulfil my Christian duty, till at last, with all those who live in Thy faith and fear, I come to the perfect enjoyment of th

glorious vision of Godhead, which I now see through a glass darkly, but then shall gaze on face to face. Amen.

The statements in this chapter are chiefly founded on the following passages of Scripture, which it will be desirable to read attentively. John, i. 1—18., iii. 3—21., v. 17—30., viii. 12—59., x. 1—18. 24—38., xiv., xv., xvi., xvii.; Eph. ii. (especially 18—22.) with St. Paul's prayer for the church in iii. 14—21.; Philipp. iii.; Heb. i., ii.; 1 John i., iii., iv. By reading large portions of Scripture of this kind, our hearts will probably be more deeply impressed with the truth and practical importance of these views of the Christian religion, than by searching for confirmations of the Trinitarian doctrine in single texts, however satisfactory to the understanding. In these passages are attributed to Christ the distinguishing perfections of Divinity; eternal existence, power of creating and preserving, omnipresence, omniscience, a right to receive our worship. *A Being to whom all this is ascribed can be*

none other than God. Besides these passages, the early part of the book of Acts furnishes us with the clearest view of the Holy Ghost's Personality and Divinity, as we should naturally expect at the beginning of that new dispensation, in which He, according to Christ's promise, was to be the Comforter and Guide of God's people. See especially v. 1—4., viii. 29., xiii. 2, &c. Again we should compare Isaiah, vi. 1—10., with John, xii. 37—41., and Acts, xxviii. 25.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III.

1. Does the word Trinity occur in Scripture? By whom and why was it invented?
2. What would be our idea of God without Christianity?
3. What would be the natural result of such a conception of God?
4. Why is Jesus Christ called the *Word*?
5. Where are we told that He is the creator of the world?
6. Show that He was the Lord of the Jewish nation.
7. How has He shown us that God sympathises with our troubles, and loves us?

8. Why could we not understand God without Christ?

9. What benefit have we derived from Christ's death?

10. What do we learn from His Resurrection?

11. What is Christ doing for us now?

12. What will He do hereafter?

13. Why are not the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of Christ sufficient to restore us to God's likeness?

14. How is that work of restoration completed?

15. What practical lesson may we derive from the words in the Nicene Creed, *proceeding from the Father and the Son*?

16. How should we show our belief in the Trinity?

17. Cite passages which tell us that Christ has existed for ever, knows all things, has a right to our worship.

18. Cite passages in which the Holy Ghost is promised as the Guide and active Governor of the Church after Christ's Resurrection.

19. Mention occasions in which He appears in that character.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BAPTISMAL VOW. — PART III.

The Ten Commandments.

I. To each of the divisions of our Baptismal Vow; the Catechism has added a short summary of the objects which it embraces. Thus the sins from which we promise to abstain are summed up as the dangers incurred from the temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; the faith to which we pledge our adherence is given in the Creed; and so in like manner the Ten Commandments are placed before us as containing a short and comprehensive summary of the moral law, which we declare our readiness to keep.

II. No one will imagine that the Ten Commandments in their literal meaning contain the whole of that moral law, who remembers how our Saviour has extended the prohibition against murder to an angry *thought*, and against adultery to a wicked

look.* Nor shall we forget the manner in which, in another place, He briefly sums up the Commandments, by declaring that they include the most zealous devotion possible both to God and to our neighbour.† The first four He reduces to the general command, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and the last six he includes in a similar manner under the direction, — Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. For the Christian service of God is not limited to a course of conduct, such as that which the Ten Commandments, taken literally, prescribe; but can only be fulfilled by a devout and purified state of mind. The whole of the Old Testament contains a succession of proofs that they could not be observed by any mere feeling of duty; that is, the principle of obedience was not sufficient to enable men to lead good lives, because human nature was so depraved and corrupt, that of itself it could not turn to holiness. Therefore the Gospel, without re-

* *Matt.* v. 21, 22, 27, 28. † *Matt.* xxii. 37—40.

laxing in the slightest degree the strictest morality required by the law, added to the principle of obedience, the more efficacious one of love ; which, though no doubt recognised in the Old Testament, is not the prominent feature of that dispensation. Instead of giving a code of laws, and requiring us to observe them, it changed the Commandments into an inward impulse to do right, by putting God's will into men's minds, and writing it in their hearts⁷, and this in two ways,—(1) by the doctrine of Justification by Faith, and (2) by that of Sanctification through the Spirit.

III. *First*, it taught men that they are justified or considered righteous in God's sight by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The meaning of this is, that whereas God's favour was extended to the Jews on condition of their obeying His Commandments, it is now promised to all, who are united in heart and soul to their Saviour, by a lively and active faith in the redemption, of which He is the author. In this way are called forth

⁷ Jer. xxxi. 33. Heb. viii. 10.

all the purest and best feelings of which we are capable, to be the means of our serving God. We serve Him, not in order that we may obtain His favour, but because, for Christ's sake, we have obtained it ; not from fear, but from gratitude. For we must remember that when to faith is annexed the promise of everlasting salvation, and when the Apostle said of it, " Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? " * — the reference is not to a belief which has its seat in the understanding, but to a faith which springs from the heart, and which, acknowledging with earnestness the mighty truth that Christ died to deliver us from sin and from its penalty, shows itself in an earnest and devoted gratitude, and in such a love as is demanded by such an inestimable blessing.

IV. Thus, then, it is intended that a holy life should arise ; that God's commandments should be kept, not only as a duty, but as a pleasure ; that our obedience should be that of sons, not of slaves, by no means limited

* 1 John, v. 5.

to the letter of God's law, but of such a kind that we should constantly feel desirous of opportunities to serve Him, so as never to be contented till every thought and feeling is brought into obedience to His will. How far superior such a service is to a mere observance of distinct laws, is seen every day. No one would think that a son, a brother, or a friend fulfilled his duty by a mere attention to the bare commands or requests of those who loved him, unless he also delighted in returning their affection, by spontaneous acts of love and kindness. No one would think a man even respectable, who abstained from robbery merely because the laws of England forbid it. We are required by the voice of society to look on offences which it pronounces dishonourable, with absolute horror and repugnance. If we carry out this principle to other sins, of which society does not take cognizance, we shall easily see how much higher is that state of mind which loathes all guilt because it is displeasing to God and Christ, and unworthy of our redemption, than that which would merely abstain from

a crime because it is included in the letter of the Ten Commandments.

V. Faith, then, must be the surest parent of holiness, for men are not righteous because they perform certain actions outwardly good, but they must have righteous principles, and then they will certainly perform good actions. Now we see at once that there can be no purer source of holiness, no principle more entirely righteous, than that love to Christ, which flows from a firm belief that He is our Saviour and our Friend, and that we are accepted by God for His sake. By such teaching, the Gospel does not interfere with the supreme importance of the principle of Duty, on the contrary, it magnifies and strengthens it. Conscience and Duty will always cry out against us when we do anything unworthy of our Christian profession, and reproach us for ingratitude to Him who died for us, while at the same time the constraining power of love to Christ will make any violations of God's will less and less possible. Thus it is Christianity only, which can enable *us to realise* such language as that in which *Wordsworth* addresses Duty : —

“There are, who ask not if thine eye
Be on them : who in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth :
Glad hearts, without reproach and blot,
Who do thy work, and know it not :
Oh ! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, *thy saving arms, dread power ! around*
them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When *love is an unerring light,*
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
E'en now, who not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed,
*Yet find thy firm support, according to their need.”**

Only, as our nature is so defiled by sin, it is no mere “genial sense of youth,” which can enable us to escape from it, for in youth as well as age this fatal corruption is but too awfully manifest. No principle can avail to turn our duty into our happiness, except this great and absorbing one of love to Christ. And as the perfection of this love is the perfection of religion, and really would enable

* Wordsworth, Ode to Duty.

us to "do God's work and know it not;" so the first beginnings of this love, involved in and resulting from the faith that Christ has died for us, should be the beginning of all true efforts after holiness. Turning first to Christ because we long to be delivered from our sins, and believe that He alone can save us, we shall begin to love Him, and from loving we shall proceed to serving Him, till at last it becomes our happiness to exert ourselves actively for God's glory, by setting a pure and holy example, by helping and persuading all under our influence to lead a Christian life, by taking all possible opportunities of carrying on Christ's work on earth.

VI. *Secondly*, the means of accomplishing this service were to be given to us, as we saw in the last chapter, by the presence of God the Holy Ghost, inspiring us with hatred to sin and love to Christ, dwelling in our hearts to strengthen and direct us, to foster every good resolution, and help us to overcome the evil principles which defile us. For our minds are so corrupted, that in spite of *the gratitude* which the thought of Christ's

Death should excite within us, we are still in our own strength unable to turn to God, or to grow in holiness. God therefore has helped us by an assistance entirely external to us, by the operation of His Spirit upon ours. Just as we are influenced by the advice, persuasion, or authority of an earthly friend, so His Spirit silently suggests to us good and holy thoughts, and gives us strength to serve God. "I will pray the Father," said our Lord, "and He shall give you another Comforter *that He may abide with you for ever.*"^b Thus guided by holy principles and Divine help, we may hope to keep God's commandments in the spirit and not in the letter. We have indeed no sensible signs that the Holy Ghost is with us, except the improvement and sanctification of our lives. But we need not doubt that He is given to those who pray for His help; for if men "being evil know how to give good gifts unto their children, how much more shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"^c There-

^b John, xiv. 16.

^c Luke, xi. 13.

fore, trusting to this promise, animated and quickened by faith in Christ, and praying earnestly for the gift of the Holy Ghost, we shall experience such a gradual change in our lives and characters as will prove to us that His help is a most solemn, and comforting, and encouraging reality.

VII. We have seen then what is the view which we take as Christians, of obedience to God's commandments. They are a short summary of the moral law binding on us originally as beings possessing conscience and reason, confirmed by the express declaration of God to the Jews on Mount Sinai, and now rendered doubly obligatory to us, not merely in their letter, but in the widest possible extension of their spirit, by the gratitude and love which must result from a true faith in Christ, and from the power of fulfilling them, which is given to us by the help of the Holy Ghost. We are not indeed to imagine that this faith, or this help, will enable us immediately to fulfil God's law. The process must be gradual. First, our *faith* will be weak and irresolute, and then *our constant prayer* must be, "Lord, increase

it.”^d But even when it is increased by the influence of God’s Spirit, we must recollect that the corruption of our nature remains, and will constantly dim its brightness. Nor shall we forget that it is by our works that God will judge us at the last ; that is, that they must prove the reality of our faith and love, or else that we shall forfeit for ever our place in Heaven. Therefore our life must for a long time be a constant struggle, and we shall not only have need of prayer, but also of a strict and earnest watchfulness, aided by a careful examination of ourselves, that we may discover and subdue those evils in our character in which this corruption principally shows itself.

VIII. Now in the case of young persons, the natural obstacles to their keeping God’s commandments, may be generally ranged under five classes,—selfishness ; vanity and the desire of applause ; carelessness ; bad temper ; and weakness. It is not intended to assert that every dangerous quality which disturbs them can be reduced to one of these heads ;

^d Luke, xvii. 5.

and the whole class of external temptations are designedly omitted, because the object is to point out some practical helps toward improving the natural character. Again ambition and pride are omitted, because they are more commonly the dangers of men than of boys, in whom they are seldom developed in their full enormity. Still they do often exist in young persons to a very great extent and any one who is conscious of either of them, may apply to himself much of what is here said with reference to selfishness and vanity. Neither is lying mentioned, for that seems generally to be rather the consequence either of selfishness or weakness, than an original and primary temptation. In the first place, then, a boy in whose heart the love of Christ has begun to operate, will earnestly endeavour to discover what are the evils in his disposition which prevent him from rendering to God the blessed service of keeping His commandments. Having ascertained this by a careful self-examination, accompanied by earnest prayer, he will first consecrate in the same way all his future efforts to God and Christ, and earnestly ask for the

Holy Spirit's help, to bless and aid his own imperfect endeavours.

IX. Now, suppose, in the first place, that he is convinced that his principal natural danger raises from selfishness. There can be no doubt that it is his duty, in order to destroy this hateful quality, to do actions positively disagreeable to himself for the sake of obliging others. He must try and compensate for the pain which such self-denial may cause him, by tasting the luxury of giving pleasure to others, acting in the spirit of our Lord's precept, It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

X. Similarly, if he finds his danger to be not so much that gross desire of making everything promote his personal enjoyment, which we commonly mean by selfishness; but that more subtle yet no less dangerous temptation, which leads him to look for his chief pleasure to the admiration of others, and to put prominently forward his own real or fancied excellencies; then it would seem right for him to abstain from doing actions, which, not being necessary in themselves,

* Acts, xx. 35.

are likely to gain for him the applause of his companions, even though they be in other respects harmless. He would do well, for instance, to avoid talking much in company where he is sure to be thought clever or witty, and to take every other similar means of fostering in himself that blessed grace of humility, than which no brighter jewel adorns the Christian crown.

XI. So again with a careless boy. It is impossible to say how carelessness manifests itself in any particular case; but suppose that any one is convinced, that to read the Bible daily would greatly help him in his Christian course, but though he has resolved to do so, often forgets it. It would seem desirable that he should acquire the habit of reading it by fixing on some definite time for doing so, and steadily resolving to give up any pleasure in which at that time he would naturally be engaged, till he has begun to consider this duty a necessary part of his daily occupations. When once the habit is acquired, he will soon cease to regard it as a task, but look upon the short period of each day which he *devotes to it*, as a refreshment and a pleasure.

And he may apply a similar method to acquire any other habit which he is desirous to gain.

XII. In faults of temper there is this peculiarity, that a person is often surprised into them suddenly, even though really struggling to conquer them. It would seem, then, that the remedy for these must be something done after the fault is committed, and which, it may be hoped, will prevent its repetition. The first course will be to acknowledge the sin to God in prayer, and ask Him to pardon it, and after this is done humbly and earnestly, then either directly to express regret to the person who has been offended, or at least to take such pains to show him kindness and attention, as to make the desire of atoning for the offence perfectly evident. The very effort of having to do this will make a person more unwilling to expose himself to the annoyance of having to do it again, and so will check him when he is next inclined to act unkindly or harshly to another. Doubtless, too, any one who so plainly proves that he is in earnest, will be restrained when the *temptation* comes, by the influence of God's

Holy Spirit, and aided by the intercessions of Jesus Christ.

XIII. With regard to the last head, that of weakness, the difficulty is certainly very great. No one has need of such constant care and watchfulness, as he who feels it an effort to resist the bad influence of others. Many boys at school who really have in themselves no love for evil, are led into actions of which they are heartily ashamed, solely by the persuasion of those who, by the unaccountable skill which wickedness possesses of gaining to itself strength and power, have acquired a kind of authority and importance among their companions. In this case, however, they have but one remedy, to separate themselves entirely and absolutely from the society of him who persuades them to do wrong. Unless this is done at all risks, there is no real security, and no one who does not take all the means in his own power to escape from the sins into which weakness leads him, can expect that God will help him or deliver him from this great defect of character.

XIV. But after all, we must remember,

that these struggles and efforts are but subsidiary to the great instrument of success, earnest and devoted and continual prayer. Or rather, perhaps, such efforts are to be considered as a part of prayer, a proof that we are really anxious for what we ask, and are ready to exert ourselves in order to obtain it. Any one who wishes to procure a favour from another, does not content himself with merely asking, but makes it manifest in many other ways that he truly and eagerly desires it. And in proportion to the eagerness shown, is the readiness of the other to grant the favour desired. It is just so in our requests to God. As He requires the service of the heart, so He demands the prayers of the heart, that is, prayers really earnest, flowing from an awakened and purified conscience, and a mind whose deepest and most pervading anxiety is to attain to holiness and everlasting glory. To such a mind He gives the aid of His Spirit, and ability to struggle against the evil inclination which most defiles it. To one He gives kindness by the same Spirit, to another strength of mind by the same Spirit, to another thoughtfulness by the

same Spirit, to another love for others by the same Spirit, to each one that quality for which he is diligently seeking, by watching and by prayer.

A PRAYER THAT WE MAY DESIRE TO DO
GOD'S WILL.

O ALMIGHTY Father, Who hast vouchsafed to deliver me from the power of darkness, and to translate me into the kingdom of Thy dear Son, I pray Thee to pour Thy Spirit into my heart, that by Him I may be quickened to newness of life. Lord, make me to love Thy commandments, and always to find my chief delight in doing Thy holy will. Deliver me from the bondage of every evil quality which prevents my growth in goodness; save me from selfishness, vanity, and thoughtlessness, and all evil tempers; give me strength and vigour to carry out my resolutions, and to enable me to serve Thee in all things. May I obey Thy blessed *commands*, not outwardly only, but inwardly, *ever hating* and shrinking from any thought

which is inconsistent with them. May they be written on my heart, according to Thy own promise; may I love Thee with all my mind, and soul, and strength; and may I love those around me as Christ has loved me. Hear me, O Father, for His sake, who died and rose again for me, and in whom alone I can hope to be changed and sanctified. Amen.

In connection with this chapter should be read the following parts of Scripture:—Matt. v. 13—48., vii. 13—20., xxv. 14—30.; Mark, x. 17—31.; Luke, vii. 36—50., xii. 35—48., xv. 11—32.^f; Gal. ii. 15—21., iii. 22—29.; 1 Pet. i. 15—25., ii.; 1 John, iv. 7—21.; Exod. xix. 1—9., xx. 1—21., compared with Heb. xii. 12—29.; James, ii. 14—26.

^f Those who can procure “Arnold’s Christian Life, its Hopes, and Fears, and Close,” should not fail to read the application of this passage to persons whose difficulties arise from other dangers than riches, contained in Sermon xxiii., “Christ’s warning to the Young.”

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV.

1. Why are the Ten Commandments inserted in the Catechism?

2. How has Christ extended the injunction of the Sixth Commandment? How of the Seventh?

3. To what general precept does He reduce the first four? To what the last six?

4. Why is the principle of obedience insufficient to make men good?

5. What principle is added to this in the Gospel?

6. How are we justified, or accounted righteous, by God?

7. What is the nature of Christian Faith?

8. From what feelings and motives ought Christians especially to observe God's Commandments?

9. To enable us to lead holy lives, what else is necessary besides a right principle of conduct?

10. What are the signs of the presence of the Holy Ghost?

11. How do we obtain His help?

12. How will the reality of our faith be tested at the day of Judgment?

CHAPTER V.

PRAYER.

I. WHEN a person who is anxious to observe the vow made for him in his Baptism, begins to put his good intentions into practice, he soon finds that he is weak and helpless, and will therefore be desirous to seek for aid elsewhere—that is, he will betake himself to prayer. It is needless to do more than refer to one or two well known passages in Scripture to prove how full, how constant, and how repeated are the promises that God will hear our prayers. “If ye ask *anything* in my Name I will do it.”^g “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”^h Or, to take a passage similar to one which was quoted in the last chapter: “If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto

^g John, xiv. 14.^h John, xv. 7.

your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"¹ Such are only a few of the declarations that God most assuredly hears and answers our prayers. Some have found a difficulty in fully accepting these promises, from the notion that as God is all-wise and all-good, His plans cannot be altered or modified by any requests or suggestions of ours. But though it is not conceivable that our prayers should *oblige* God to listen to our wishes, we can perfectly understand that He Himself may *choose* so to modify His providential purposes. He, who is Almighty, has condescended to reveal to us that in arranging His government of our affairs, He takes account of the earnest desires and requests of those who approach Him in and through His Son Jesus Christ; and this no doubt with the view of teaching us that we are His children, and helping us to love Him with true piety and affectionate devotion. Just as He has told us that His intentions as to our everlasting condition in the next world

¹ Matt. vii. 11.

are made to depend upon our own actions, so also is He pleased to make our condition now, in spiritual matters entirely, and in temporal things to a great extent, dependent upon our prayers to Him. Of course both one arrangement and the other results merely from God's Almighty will. He might have resolved to be influenced by nothing which we could either do or say, but it His pleasure to take compassion upon us, and listen to the humble expression of our earnest wishes. Since then we are provided with such a way as this of escaping from sin, and abiding always in communion with God and Christ, we shall surely desire constantly to avail ourselves of it. We shall remember that our blessed Lord remained a whole night in prayer^k; and this example may suggest to us that we should do more than express to Him our wants merely in the evening and the morning. We shall feel the need of His help to hold us up during the day, and shall make it a rule, in the course of our daily work, to consecrate some few

^k Luke, vi. 12.

minutes to God, and pray for His help to deliver us from the temptations which surround us on every side. Such prayers would extend a blessed and hallowing influence over our most absorbing occupations, gaining for us fresh supplies of spiritual strength, reminding us of the necessity of constant watchfulness, and keeping alive within us the recollection, that at every moment of our lives we are not only exposed to danger, but are also capable of receiving God's blessing and care. We must remember also, that if, as St. Paul tells us, we are "to pray without ceasing,"¹ we must not even limit ourselves to any definite times specially set apart for devotion; but must try to call up thoughts of Christ at all hours and in all places, and in the midst of work or of pleasure, to breathe a silent petition for His guiding and preserving care, remembering that it is a Christian's duty to hallow every occupation to his Master's glory, and to exclude from it even the smallest sin; and that no business or amusement, in the course of which Christ's Image

¹ 1 Thess. v. 17.

may not fitly recur to our minds, can be proper for those who have been baptized into His Name, and commanded unceasingly to beseech Him for His help.

II. When we read in the Bible the above strong declarations, that whatever we ask we shall receive, our first impulse must be to imagine that every blessing, spiritual or temporal, is placed within our reach. But we must remember the limitation which is put to this by the general idea of God and of His laws which we get from the Bible and our own consciences. We know most certainly two things on this subject, first, that the blessings of this life are often not in reality blessings, but curses, inasmuch as they make us love the world too well, prevent our thinking of Christ or desiring heaven, and encourage us in selfishness and carelessness: secondly, that our Father who is in heaven, has numbered all the hairs of our head, and knows better what is good for us than we do ourselves. Now if we really with our hearts believe those two facts (and the belief of the heart is the only sort of faith to which any promises are attached in Scrip-

ture), we certainly shall make use of them in our prayers. We shall never pray for a temporal blessing without the reservation, "if Thou, O Father, seest that it is good for me to have it." If we do not act thus, we do not believe what Christ has told us, and therefore have no reason to expect His blessing on our prayers. For instance, if we were to pray for great riches, the fact of our doing so would not only prove in general that our state of mind was worldly, and that therefore the love of the Father was not in us, but also more particularly, that we had no faith in Christ's declaration that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.^m Again, we must remember, that it is no limitation of Christ's promise to confine it to the objects for which He was sent into the world. If a merchant, on starting for some distant expedition, were to promise his children that he would bring them whatever they asked, it would be plainly no limitation of his promise to say that he only

^m Matt. xix. 24.

meant the productions of those countries which he was going to visit. A man going to Africa would not be considered to have broken his promise by not bringing his children the produce of a northern climate. Now the objects for which Christ came to us are not connected with our temporal position and prosperity in this world, but with our eternal interests in another. We shall not, indeed, hesitate to make our temporal concerns a matter of prayer, because we know that they do materially affect our progress in holiness, and also that our kind and loving Saviour is thoroughly interested in them all. This is one of the chief blessings of His Redemption and Mediation; this is one great benefit which we derive from the fact that He took our nature upon Him. Having made Himself Man, he knows thoroughly what is in man. He is fully aware of all our wants and weaknesses. And therefore we have no want, no desire, which is too trifling to be made an object of His tenderest sympathy. We may have feelings and troubles which we should scarcely like to confess to the very dearest earthly friend or relation,

because they might laugh at us for feeling annoyance at a thing in their eyes so worthless. But Christ can feel for us in everything, and therefore in everything we may claim His help; nor is there any annoyance which we may not ask Him to remove. Only we shall ask Him according to His own directions. We shall remember that when St. Paul was troubled by what he calls "a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him," that is, some secret vexation which interfered with his happiness, and undivided attention to God's service, he besought the Lord thrice that it should depart from him. But what was the answer? Not that the trouble should be removed, but that strength should be given to him to bear it. "My strength is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."ⁿ

III. But we have a yet higher example to teach us the spirit in which we ought to pray for temporal blessings. Our Lord Himself in His agony in the garden, prayed that the cup might pass from Him, if it was His

ⁿ 2 Cor. xii. 7—9.

Father's will.^o And we are told expressly, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that His prayer was heard. We read there that Christ "in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, *was heard* in that He feared."^p Now we know that He was not heard in the sense of receiving the literal accomplishment of His prayer. He was not saved from death, for if He had been, we should not have been redeemed. But there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening Him.^q God answered His prayer in His own way, He helped Him to bear what it was necessary that he should undergo. And so it will be with us. Whatever temporal evil we suffer, whatever temporal good we are forbidden to share, if we make our discomfort the subject of prayer to God, He will either grant us what we ask, or give us grace and strength to bear His refusal. Only we must pray to God as Christians should, and as Christ their Master

^o Luke, xxii. 42.

^p Heb. v. 7.

^q Luke, xxxii. 43.

has taught them. "Not my will," He said, "but Thine be done." God's will is always to promote our real and true happiness in every matter, whether small or great; for if He has numbered the hairs of our head, He has surely reckoned up also our sorrows and our joys.

IV. But when we turn from petitions for temporal blessings, to prayers for improvement in holiness, and Christian feeling, we find ourselves at once in the midst of those gifts which Christ died and rose again to procure for us, and for which, therefore, we may ask, with the fullest confidence that God will grant us what we pray for. Here we must remember that two things are necessary for the accomplishment of our prayers; perseverance and watchfulness. We must not only ask God to deliver us from our sins, but we must ourselves be on our guard against the smallest approach to them, and ready to defend ourselves at any moment by a prayer for help, and a struggle for victory. We must also endeavour by thought and prayer to find out what our faults are; for the delusion of *sin is so strong* and deceptive, that we are not

only unable to conquer our faults without God's help, but are absolutely incapable of knowing them. Therefore we must really and sincerely pray to God for the great gift of self-knowledge, that we may know what our character is. Such prayer is surely followed by divine illumination; we are led to compare our own conduct with the standard of Christ's religion, and to see in how many respects it differs from His declared will. We are led to see also the connection between different sins, how that from one we are led on to another, and so at last become confirmed in the habit of both. For instance, it is certain that a person who is very weak and irresolute, is also often apt to be deceitful. For no doubt it requires moral courage always to speak the truth; a weak and irresolute boy often desires to keep on good terms with the servants of Christ, and the servants of evil; he is half ashamed of yielding to the latter, and is anxious at the same time to keep up a fair appearance with those whose approbation he knows to be really best worth having. So he is led from weakness to deceit, from deceit to positive falsehood; merely be-

cause, in defiance of the express warning of Scripture, he has attempted to combine the service of God and Mammon.^r So, again, falsehood often springs from selfishness, for he who is bent above all things on devising plans for his own gratification, cannot bear to give them up when truth and goodness interpose barriers in the way of their accomplishment. Then he at once oversteps these barriers, he fabricates falsehoods to minister to his own enjoyment, and further his own devices. Hence with our prayers should be combined a strict self-examination, that so we may trace the commission of open and flagrant sins to the existence of some hidden evil in our characters, against which it is especially needful to watch and pray.

V. Above all, we must at no time suffer ourselves to forget the great truth, that without Christ we can do nothing^s, that in ourselves we have no power to change our hearts, but that it is the Spirit of God alone who can enable us to conquer our natural dispositions, and whose help must therefore be

^r *Matt. vi. 24.*

^s *John, xv. 5.*

sought by continual prayer. Nor will there be much difficulty in ascertaining whether we have really obtained His help or not, and whether we are or are not quenching the good thoughts which He suggests to us. His workings, indeed, will not be consciously felt and recognised by us *whilst they are proceeding*, for their operation is silent and unperceived. Just as our bodies grow; and continue to be guided by the marvellous mechanism which directs them, without our feeling it, and as every instant of our earthly life is really, though not to us consciously, sustained by the loving care of our Father who is in heaven; so also to those who watch and pray, the spiritual life is supported and strengthened by the Spirit of God, even though they are not sensible of His presence. They carry on their quiet course of prayer and inward struggle, and they find, on comparing their present state with their condition some time ago, that it is nearly as much changed and improved as is the bodily health of him who has been gaining every day, without perceiving it, fresh strength and vigour from the operation of some wisely chosen medicine.

And meantime, as we know that all good thoughts come from that Spirit, we must be on our guard against quenching and stifling them, by yielding to the suggestions of selfishness and sin. Whenever we feel disposed to neglect or postpone a duty, to indulge an evil passion or temper, or give way to any fault against which we have prayed, we know that the enemy of our souls is laying a snare for us, and seeking to quench an inspiration suggested by the Holy Spirit of God and Christ. It is ours to choose which we will follow, the dictates of Him who is sent to us by our Saviour in answer to our prayers, to bless us and make us His through time and through eternity, or of him whose only wish is to effect our everlasting ruin.

VI. Neither must we forget that with all our prayers for ourselves, supplications for others also must be united. Indeed, if we have any true feelings of affection for a friend or relation, we naturally feel an impulse to pray for him. And it must be our constant endeavour to extend these feelings and prayers more and more widely, not only to make the *wants of our near friends* a subject of prayer,

but to pray for blessings on the whole church of Christ, a practice, of which the example is remarkably given in the form of prayer taught us by our Saviour Himself.

VII. The Lord's Prayer is given in the Catechism as the model of all our supplications, and the summary to which all can be reduced. Though intended by our Lord to be used in the actual words in which it occurs in Scripture, yet His chief design in giving it was to provide us with a kind of fountain of prayer, from which we may draw copious supplies for longer and more particular devotions. Beginning by addressing God as a father, and thereby acknowledging that we are His children, through Him who has delivered us from the bondage of corruption, we are further taught to invoke Him as *our* Father, confessing ourselves to be members of a body, so that every one of us seeks to draw God's blessing on the wants and necessities of the whole, just as he is hereafter to partake in the glory of all his brethren ; supplicating in behalf of all, what he asks for himself, since in fact the kingdom of God in its perfection can only come to him in as

far as it comes to all ; for till all *men* *be* become members of it, not merely *in* *pr* fession, but in deed and in truth, sin *ar* hatred and disunion must still remain *upc* earth ; and therefore till all men share th blessings which are asked for in the Lord Prayer, every individual must suffer, in som degree, from finding himself unable to realis at all times the happiness of universal peace and love. To this title we add, *which art in Heaven*, in order that nothing earthly may be joined to our conception of the spiritual majesty of God. We pray that His Name, (*i. e.* His character and all His relations to us) may be hallowed, by our praising and acknowledging Him not in words only, but in our hearts and lives. Next we ask that the holy society of God's children, which has been founded in the power of Christ His Son, may be ever more and more firmly planted among mankind, may grow continually in holiness, and extend its limits, while Christ's redeeming influence triumphs over all His enemies, till it reaches that promised consummation when all opposition will be *cast under His feet*, and God will be all in

all.^t We pray also that men may have strength to do His will as entirely on earth, as it is done by the angels and spirits who have never fallen. Turning now from the contemplation of God to the consideration of ourselves, we ask first for temporal necessities, since our earthly state is to a great extent the foundation of our spiritual condition; praying as Solomon did, neither for poverty nor riches, but to be fed with food convenient for us.^v Then we beg for forgiveness, acknowledging that the only state of mind which has any claim to it, is that in which we are ready to forgive those who have trespassed against us. We then divert our thoughts from the past to the future, praying God not merely to save us from such heavy trials of our faith as those to which Abraham^w and Job^x were exposed, but further, so as to arrange His providential government of the world, as not to lead us into circumstances of temptation, but that we may be delivered from all evil. Finally, we ascribe to God all power, dominion, and

^t 1 Cor. xv. 28.^v Prov. xxx. 8.^w Gen. xxii.^x Job, i. 8—12.

glory, and so, as it were, throw ourselves entirely on His protection and almighty care.

PRAYER FOR GOD'S GUIDANCE IN OUR
DEVOTIONS.

ALMIGHTY God ! Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through Him of all those whom He has redeemed, send to me Thy blessed Spirit, to teach me how to pray. I confess to Thee my past indifference and negligence : O forgive me, Lord, for such great and grievous sin. Give me grace to feel it a privilege and a happiness to pray to Thee ; may Thy Spirit so dwell in me that at all times and places I may be ready to turn my heart to Thee, and devote it to Thy glory. Help me also to value more deeply all the public services in which I am called upon to engage ; grant that I may care more for holy things, and therefore attend to them with greater earnestness. Teach me also to love Thy Holy Scriptures, to read them and pray over them, and take them as the guide of all *my actions* ; and increase in me Thy faith

and love, so that I may realise the unseen things which they declare to me. May I sometimes think of Thee and of Thy Son, amidst the stir and bustle of my daily life ; may I be more eager to attain to holiness and everlasting glory, and therefore more ready to enjoy the blessed privilege of communion with Thee, in every one of Thy appointed ways. Grant also, O Lord, to others all the blessings which I ask for myself, especially to all who are dearest to me, to my friends and relations, and to every member of this School. Pour upon us all the spirit of grace and supplication, increase in our hearts ever good and holy desire, and bring us at the last to Thine everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The following parts of Scripture bear on the subjects of this chapter : —

Matt. vi. 5—15., xxvi. 36—46. ; Luke, xi. 1—13., xviii. 1—14., xxii. 39—46. ; John, xvi. 23—27. ; Rom. viii. 26—28. ; Eph. vi. 10—20. ; 1 Tim. ii. 1—8. ; James, v. 13—18.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER V.

1. Quote passages which tell us that God hears our prayers.

2. Answer the objection to prayer, that as God is Almighty and Allwise, His plans cannot be influenced by the wishes of beings whose faculties are limited.

3. Show that such an objection might be also urged against a future judgment.

4. What example have we of the time which our Lord devoted to prayer?

5. What is St. Paul's command on this subject? How can we obey it?

6. Why may we not pray unreservedly for temporal blessings?

7. What reason have we for believing that Christ can sympathise with our temporal wants and weaknesses?

8. How is the spirit in which we should ask for temporal things illustrated in the case of St. Paul?

9. How in the case of our Lord?

10. What do we read on the subject of question 9 in the Epistle to the Hebrews?

11. For what may we pray without reserve or limitation?

12. How do bodily things illustrate the manner in which God's Spirit influences our minds?

13. How does the Lord's Prayer teach us that we *must pray* for others as well as for ourselves?

14. How is the spiritual good of others necessary for our own happiness ?

15. Explain the words *Thy kingdom come.*

16. With what prayer of Solomon's may we compare *Give us this day our daily bread ?*

17. Explain *Lead us not into temptation.*

CHAPTER VI.

BAPTISM.

I. WE now come to the consideration of the two Sacraments which Christ left to His Church, as a means of maintaining and strengthening its connection with Himself. With regard to the first of them, Baptism, it is uncertain whether the rite was a Jewish custom, handed down by tradition from the primitive times of the Mosaic dispensation, and used as a form of admitting proselytes into the commonwealth of Israel, and even in the case of Hebrew infants, as an accompaniment to Circumcision; or whether, as is argued from the fact of its being never mentioned in the Old Testament, it was merely suggested by the ablutions prescribed in the Law, and which were typical of washing away moral impurity. That the rite, for one of these two reasons, was not strange *to the Jews*, seems plain, from the manner

in which they came to be baptized by John the Baptist, not as to a new ceremony, but as to one with which, in its outward aspect, they were familiar.

II. But John's Baptism was only the preliminary to the institution of the Christian Sacrament of Baptism, which admits men to the Holy Catholic Church, that great Society of believers in Christ, who, having been redeemed by His death from sin, are bound to shape their conduct in all respects according to His teaching, and are aided in doing so by the help of the Holy Ghost. No doubt, before our Lord's appearance on earth, the Holy Ghost had been given to many of God's servants, as the very existence of the Old Testament sufficiently proves. From Him all good thoughts must have sprung; by His inspiration the Prophets were commissioned to declare God's will; and the Psalms were invested with a spiritual religion so deep and true, that many of them have been to Christians in all ages the appropriate expression of praise, and penitence, and prayer. But the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the fulfilment of the promise that He should

permanently dwell among us, and *make u*
 His temple^y, was postponed till *Christ ha-*
 died to deliver us from the punishment *t due*
 to sin. As St. Paul explains David's *pro*
 phesy^z; Christ first went up on high, and
 led captivity captive, by triumphing over
 death, and then received gifts for men, that
 the Lord God, even His Holy Spirit, might
 dwell among them. Again, the superiority
 of our privileges over those of the saints who
 lived before Christ's coming, is plain, from
 the fact that the Holy Spirit could not bring
 to their remembrance "whatsoever Christ
 had said." On our hearts He impresses the
 morality of the Sermon on the Mount, our
 Lord's other discourses, the lessons of the
 Parables, the example of Christ's conduct,
 the recollection that He was tempted like as
 we are, the comforts, the blessings, the
 warnings, the encouragements which He has
 given us, the knowledge that sin and death
 are conquered because Christ has died and
 risen again, instead of the mere hope that
 they would be conquered when at last the

^y 1 Cor. vi. 19.

^z Eph. iv. 8. The prophecy is from Psalm lxxviii. 18.

Messiah should come. It was not, therefore, till after Christ had lived, and taught, and died, and risen again, that the Holy Catholic Church, or kingdom of God on earth, was really founded, even though there had been already lesser manifestations and anticipations of it. And at the same time the true sense of Christian Baptism was fully declared, and instead of the Baptism which John preached, and which, being connected only with repentance, was no more than a preparation for the blessings of the Christian covenant, Christ ordered His disciples to baptize men in (or into) the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, retaining the form of purification by water, as a symbol of consecration into His kingdom.

III. The whole force, therefore, of Christian Baptism depends upon the fact which lies at the foundation of all Christian doctrines and institutions, that we are born in a corrupt state, alienated from God. Christ having died and risen again for man's restoration, founded a Church, or body of believers, to be reunited to his Father by faith in Him-

self, and to live under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. All those, then, who were willing to enter into this revived relation with God, or whose parents, having themselves embraced it, wished their children from their earliest years to partake of its benefits, might be admitted into it by this newly instituted Sacrament, which was, therefore, emphatically a new birth, for the person who had been naturally born into a world of darkness and sin, was now spiritually born into, or made a member of, the Church of Christ, to which was promised this gift of the Holy Ghost. As a child passes from the darkness of its mother's womb to the light of the world, where the sun shines over it, and the breeze plays upon it and invigorates it*, so also does the baptized person pass from a state of corruption and bondage, and becomes a member of a Society, whose Head and King is Christ, and whose Guide is Christ's Holy Spirit. But, just as the fact of our birth into the world will not preserve us alive, and strong, and healthy, unless in our infancy we are watched by others, and unless

* John, iii. 3—5.

as we grow up we guard our own health, and seek for remedies when it fails us, so is it with the spiritual privileges of which we become partakers in baptism. Unless in childhood we are taught and guarded by our parents, and those who love us and are placed over us; unless as we begin to understand our own position as responsible beings, placed on the brink of an awful eternity, but redeemed and ransomed by the blood of Christ, we also seek for God's help in prayer, watch over all our sinful inclinations, and take every possible means of strengthening our faith, and hope, and love; our baptismal admission into Christ's kingdom will avail us nothing, but we shall gradually fall away from His redemption, and lose those great blessings which He came to win for us, pardon, and holiness, and everlasting glory. . Baptism, in fact, introduces us to the covenanted privileges of Christianity, by bringing us into the relation of children to the One God, who is revealed through the Son, as the Father of the fallen and corrupt human family, and who gives His Spirit to all whom His Son has redeemed. It takes

us out of the world, *i. e.* out of a state of alienation and enmity, and makes us children of Him, whom men are taught to worship with a reasonable service, as God *in* Christ and *through* the Spirit; of God made known to us in the Incarnation of the Word, and communicated to us through, or by means of, the Holy Ghost.

IV. Hence it is an obvious consequence of this, that Baptism should be administered to infants, because it is not, like the other Sacrament, connected with anything done on our part, but is an admission into that state, in and by which we are enabled to do God's work. So the Christian child does not first come into Christ's church from Heathenism, or from a life of sin, but is intended to grow up, from the earliest dawning of conscience, under the influence of God's Spirit, as the friend and brother of Christ. A modern poet has truly said, "I count the grey barbarian lower than the Christian child;"^b for, from the very beginning of thought in his mind, a divine principle is near him, to which the better part of his nature is at-

^b Tennyson. *Locksley Hall.*

tracted, and by which his ungodly inclinations are repelled; and therefore the visible token of a new birth is given him at once in Baptism, and from his earliest childhood he is consecrated to his Redeemer. It may be that through the neglect of others and of himself, this blessing may be made all but unavailing. It may be that his wickedness may drive Christ's Spirit from his heart, so that in later life he must undergo a process of conversion as complete as that of a Heathen who heard the preaching of St. Paul. Still that is no reason why we should doubt that in his infancy Christ did favourably receive him, when presented for admission into His Church, and did embrace him with the arms of His mercy. Christ is indeed driven from him, just as health and strength are often driven from the body by dissipation and excess. As health and strength will not return without God's blessing on our own very great and constant care, so neither will Christ come back to him who persists in breaking his baptismal vow, till he has undergone a desperate and deadly struggle with the sins which have led him astray.

V. But however this may be in our own case, still it is most important for us all to recollect that Baptism changes not our *nature*, but only our *state* and condition. It does not root out sin for us, but makes us members of a body to which is promised such help, that all who persevere in using it may root it out for themselves. So that no person, because he is baptized, is exempt from the necessity of going through the process which St. Paul describes when he says "If Christ be in us, the body is dead because of sin."^c As we learn from another place "In that Christ died, He died unto sin once,"^d that is, He died because of sins taking them upon Himself as though they had been His own, and then dying to atone for them. If, therefore, we are Christ's there must be in us also a death unto sin. We must be crucified with Christ^e, that is the sin which is in us must be destroyed; our flesh or body—by which phrases are meant our naturally corrupt inclinations—must be mortified and dead. The objects for which w

^c *Rom. viii. 10.*

^d *Rom. vi. 10.*

^e *Gal. ii. 20*

are living must be changed. Whereas our hearts are naturally devoted to our own pleasure, and the acquisition of this world's blessings, we must strive to live as those whose citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may in heart and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell, placing before ourselves as the end and object of our existence, not the gratification of our own selfish wishes, but the consecration of our spirits, souls, and bodies, to the service of God. Such a change may well be called dying, and this death can only be effected by the workings of God's Spirit, promised to Christ's baptized people. And as no one can die without knowing it, so also, if our sins are now dying within us, we must be conscious that the process is going on. The destruction of sin within us, if it is really advancing, must cause in us an internal struggle, and that of sufficient intensity to be compared to the process of natural death. The death of our sins need not be sudden, any more than the death of our

bodies ; it may be going on all our lives, and, beginning from our baptism, may only receive its perfect accomplishment when the vital breath passes from us. But still those who do not now feel any such deep anxiety for the conquest of sin, as St. Paul represents by the strong language just quoted, have great reason earnestly to pray God so to strengthen in them the sense of penitence and shame, and so to increase their longing for growth in grace, that they too, like their Saviour, may die unto sin once, and also like Him, may live for ever unto God.

VI. The account of baptism given in this chapter seems to teach us a double lesson. *First*, a caution as to the danger of unduly valuing it, by imagining that baptism in itself will communicate holiness to us ; *secondly*, a warning against the error of depreciating it into a mere ceremony to which no blessings are attached, while the real conversion from sin to God is always to be expected at a later age ; from which it would follow that we may not regard all around us as God's redeemed and chosen children ; *many of whom* indeed are despising His

great goodness to them, but who are still all brought into His covenant, members of a society to which the aid of the Comforter is promised by a distinct revelation from God, and so made by a double tie our brethren.

VII. To believe, indeed, that any outward ceremony can avail to change the heart, is a superstition completely refuted by the words of our Lord—"There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him, *because it entereth not into his heart,* but the things which come out of him, these are they which defile the man; for from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts."^f If nothing external can defile the heart, neither can anything external purify it; and therefore we must not imagine that our nature can be changed in baptism, or by any means but by the Spirit of God acting within us. But though our nature is not changed in baptism, yet, as we have said, our state is changed; for an outward ceremony, performed in obedience to Christ's command, may fully admit us to the helps,

^f Mark, vii. 15. &c.

and blessings, and privileges of His Church. Just as when a child is born, and passes from his mother's womb, although his nature remains the same, yet his condition is altered to one which renders him capable of development into a full-grown and reasonable being ; so, too, when we are admitted by baptism into the Church of Christ, our nature remains unaltered, but we are received into a body to whose faithful members is promised divine assistance in this world, and everlasting happiness in the world which is to come. And this view coincides exactly with the teaching of the Prayer Book. We read in the Catechism, that being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace. But this can only mean, that we are admitted to the privileges and blessings of Christianity, not that we are made holy ; for in the Baptismal Service, after thanking God that it hath pleased Him to regenerate the baptized infant with His Holy Spirit, to receive him for His own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into His Holy Church, the minister is directed to pray that "he being

dead unto sin and living unto righteousness . . . may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin ;” and to exhort the sponsors to take care that he be “ virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life, remembering always that baptism doth represent unto us our profession ; which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him ; that as He died and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.”

VIII. On the other hand, we should not doubt that ever since we were thus admitted into Christ’s Church, the Holy Spirit has been near us, that Christ has regarded us with special love as His redeemed and chosen brethren, and that the Father has received our prayers as the petitions of those whom he has given to the Son. Our sins have been committed in spite of these advantages, and have therefore incurred a heavier guilt. Youth has been no excuse for us, for Christ

commanded little children to come to Him, and in obedience to His command, we were brought to Him in our earliest years. We may well apply to ourselves and our baptized brethren, those well-known and beautiful words :—

“ Even so, who loves the Lord aright,
No soul of man can worthless find,
All will be precious in his sight,
Since Christ on all hath shined :—

“ But chiefly Christian souls ; for they
Though worn and soiled with sinful clay,
Are yet to eyes that see them true
All glistening with baptismal dew.”^ε

The two lines in italics seem exactly to express the view of baptism here given, viz. that a baptized person does not lose his natural and corrupt inclinations, but, in virtue of his admission to the Christian Covenant, is in a state of privilege and blessing. Of course it will also follow that he is in a state of responsibility, and therefore that his sins excite a peculiar displeasure in Him who is hereafter to judge us according to our works.

^ε Keble. — *Christian Year*.

IX. In this chapter it is maintained that Baptism is the only method of admission to the blessings of Christianity, which Christ Himself has authorised. We do not deny He also shows favour to many others who believe in Him, but yet from the fault of their parents, or a mistaken interpretation of Scripture, or other such causes, have not been baptized: but this is a point which it is unnecessary to consider in a work addressed to members of the English Church. It will be sufficient to state that this is the view of Hooker^h, who says, “The law of Christ which maketh Baptism necessary, must be construed according to rules of natural equity. Which rules, if (men) did not follow in expounding the law of God, would they ever be able to prove that the Scripture, in saying *Whoso believeth not the Gospel of Christ is condemned already*, meaneth this sentence of those which can hear the Gospel, and have discretion when they hear to understand it, neither ought it to be applied unto infants, deaf men, and fools? That which teacheth them thus

^h Ecclesiastical Polity, v. 60.

to interpret the law of Christ is natural equity. And because equity so teacheth, it is on all parts gladly confessed, that there may be in divers cases life by virtue of inward Baptism, even where outward is not found."

PRAYER FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF
BAPTISMAL PRIVILEGES.

O LORD Jesus Christ, who didst receive me in my infancy into the arms of Thy mercy, and hast promised to me the blessing of eternal life, pardon the many years of sin which have so miserably polluted me, and made me so unworthy to be called my heavenly Father's son. Forgive me that I have so seldom and so weakly fought under Thy banner, that I have so often and so wickedly deserted Thee. O may I die unto sin and live unto righteousness; and being buried with Thee in Thy death, may I crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; so that as I have been partaker of Thy death, I may be partaker of Thy resurrection, and thereby finally, with *the residue* of Thy holy church, I may be an

inheritor of Thine everlasting kingdom, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

With this chapter should be read the following passages :— John, iii. 1—13. ; Matt. xxviii. 16—20. ; Acts, xix. 1—6. ; Matt. iii., Rom. viii., Col. ii. 1—15., where the phrase *buried with Him in Baptism*, refers to the original custom of baptism by immersion. The immersion symbolises the death of our sins, the coming out from the water represents our resurrection to a holy life. Baptism by sprinkling was permitted in very early times to sick persons who could not be immersed, and those so baptized were called *Clinici*, from κλίνη, *a bed*. The same necessity obviously applies still more widely to persons born in our colder climates, and especially to the case of infants. The fact of any one thinking immersion necessary could only result from that overvaluing of outward signs, which is most repugnant to the spirit of a religion so essentially spiritual as ours.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI.

1. What opinions are held as to the origin of the baptismal ceremony?
2. What was the nature of John's Baptism?
3. What is meant by the Holy Catholic Church?
4. In what sense is Baptism *a new birth*?
5. Justify the practice of Infant Baptism.
6. What benefits do you suppose that a child receives from Baptism?
7. Explain the phrase *a death unto sin*.
8. Need this death be sudden?
9. What is the danger of overvaluing Baptism?
10. What is the danger of undervaluing it?
11. Why cannot Baptism change the heart?
12. What declaration of our Lord's illustrates this?
13. How should the fact of Baptism influence our connection with one another?
14. Compare the state of the Saints under the old dispensation with that to which we are admitted.
15. Support the explanation of Baptism here given from the Prayer Book.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

I. AFTER a child is admitted by Baptism into a new and spiritual fellowship, the next great object must be to keep him in it. It is intended that this should be effected by various means, all pointing to the one great principle, that he must be absolutely and constantly united to Christ, and derive from Him all spiritual life and sustenance. This principle is inculcated by our Lord, when He tells His disciples that He will abide in them, and compares their connection with Him to that of branches to the vine.¹ His intention was to teach us to consecrate to Him every thought and feeling, and to rest upon Him every hope of resisting temptation, and of attaining to holiness here, and everlasting life hereafter. But the passage in which this

¹ John, xv. 1. &c.

doctrine is most clearly set forth is that part of the 6th chapter of St. John's Gospel, in which, when our Lord saw that great numbers were attracted to His preaching by His miracle of feeding five thousand men with five barley loaves, He contrasted the perishing meat which He had just bestowed upon them, with the heavenly food of eternal life which He offered to all mankind. This He said was to be obtained by eating His Body, and drinking His Blood. It must be plain to any one who reads this chapter, and compares it with other parts of our Lord's teaching, that His words here are figurative, and intend to express by the strongest possible metaphor, the necessity that our souls should depend upon Him for sustenance, as entirely as the life of our bodies is maintained by natural food. This, in fact, He tells us Himself in the 63rd verse, where, when some who had understood Him literally, called His discourse a hard saying, He answered, that He Himself should ascend up where He was before, and therefore could not be their food; *that the flesh (a carnal or literal interpretation of His words) profited nothing, but that*

the words which He spoke unto them *were spirit and life*. The passage, in fact, teaches that great doctrine which is the essence of Christianity, "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: *for without Me ye can do nothing:*"^k but it expresses this in language whose strength is justified by the extreme importance of the subject, and which is sufficiently striking to prevent us from explaining it away, or lowering its impressive solemnity, by fancying that it implies nothing more than the duty of embracing Christ's religion, and acting according to His precepts.

II. But our Lord also resolved to impress this obligation upon His disciples by a still more permanent memorial, by the institution of a rite which should not only symbolise the same truth, but should also be a means of that feeding upon Himself which He here declares necessary. As in the case of Baptism He availed Himself of a practice already existing, and appropriated it to His own purposes; so did He with regard to the

^k John, xv. 5.

Sacrament of His Supper. In the Passover was celebrated the foundation of the Jewish religion, and the covenant which the people had made with God was in it, as it were, annually renewed. When the master of a house kept the Passover with his family, he distributed among them bread and wine, and at the same time thanked God for giving these fruits of the earth to man, and rescuing His chosen people from the bondage of Egypt, to enjoy them in the land of their fathers. Hence the cup was called the cup of thanksgiving or blessing.¹ When Christ turned this practice into the Covenant Feast of His holy Church, He, as the Master of the House^m, spoke the blessing over it, transferring it, however, from the commemoration of natural gifts and temporal mercies, to His own sacrifice, to the deliverance of mankind from sin, and the foundation of that heavenly kingdom which His Resurrection was about to open to them. Hence the bread and wine were to be to all

¹ Hence the Lord's Supper is called the Eucharist, *εὐχαριστία*.


^m *Hcb. iii. 2, 3.*

His disciples, His Body and Blood ; just as they now enjoyed this earthly nourishment, so should they receive Him by His Spirit, eating in faith His Body, and drinking His Blood, that is, becoming imbued with the divine principles of life and holiness, and the strength to conquer sin, which they would receive from communion with Him. *To eat His Flesh* seems especially to refer to a heartfelt appreciation of the blessings of His Incarnation: *to drink His Blood* is to realise the benefit derived from the shedding of that Blood on the Cross. They were to keep this feast together as a commemoration of His death, a symbol of their union with Him, a means of strengthening and preserving this union, and a communion of love and Christian fellowship with one another. Thus were they in this feast to show forth the Lord's death till He should come, that is, till He should return to take them to Himself, when they were again to see Him, and be united with Him in heaven ; when He would take His place at the head of all His redeemed, and admit them to that *state of transcendent happiness, which he*

describes by saying that He would drink with them the fruit of the vine, new in the kingdom of God.

III. As in the case of Baptism, so in that of the Lord's Supper, there are opposite errors against which we must guard. On the one hand we must not imagine that attendance at the Communion is meritorious in itself, or at all conducive to our benefit, apart from the state of mind in which we approach it. "The means whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is *faith*:"ⁿ a statement which may be compared with an answer in the Catechism often misinterpreted: "The Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received *by the faithful*^o in the Lord's Supper." Therefore on the one hand we deny that the Communion is of any benefit to us whatever, or Christ's Body and

ⁿ See the 28th Article of the Church of England, "*Of the Lord's Supper.*"

^o For, of course, if the bread and wine were actually changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, these *would be received* by the wicked as well as by the *faithful*. So that this answer in the Catechism does  countenance Transubstantiation.

Blood in any sense received by us, unless we go to that Sacrament in earnest faith, with hearts disciplined by penitence and prayer, and a sincere resolution to lead a holy life. But again we assert, that as our Lord has said, "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, *ye have no life in you :*"^p so those who have a true faith in His death, and earnestly long to be made more like Him, do in that Communion receive from Him into their souls the spiritual nourishment, which He described as His Body and His Blood. Not indeed that the Communion is the only way of our so feeding upon Him; to pray, and humbly meditate on His goodness and His love, to read His Holy Word, and encourage in our hearts pious, and reverent, and loving thoughts of Him, are all, in their measure, means of feeding upon Him. But the highest act of fellowship with Him is a faithful reception of this blessed Sacrament, and certainly no one who wilfully or carelessly absents himself from it, can be considered in any real sense a Christian at all.

^p John vi. 53.

IV. The declaration with regard to the Communion, that those who receive it unworthily eat and drink their own damnation^a, should deter no one from going to it, though it may well prevent his doing so carelessly. Even though it is most true, that the word which we render *damnation*, does not mean *damnation* in its strongest sense of everlasting misery, but *condemnation* or *judgment*, still no one who feels any fear of God, would willingly expose himself to His displeasure. But to those who imagine that they are too sinful to go, we reply, that if they really and truly feel themselves to be sinful, and are desirous not to continue so, they are in a state of mind exactly fitted for the profitable reception of the ordinance; whereas, if they wait till they are not sinful, they certainly will never go at all. All that every one has to do, is to ask himself, Am I sorry for my sins, and desirous by Christ's help to be made better? If this is sincerely asked and answered, no one need shrink from going to the Communion, or rather, no one should be

^a 1 Cor. xi. 29.

without great fear of the consequences of staying away, and thereby violating an express command of Christ, rejecting one great means of union with Him, which He has instituted; and incurring, in the strictest sense, the *condemnation* of God.

V. Neither must we neglect that view of the Lord's Supper, which represents it as a Communion with each other, and a sign of our union with Christ, as belonging to a body of which He is the Head. "This," says St. John, "is God's commandment, that we should love one another, as He gave us commandment."^r While performing our highest act of faith, we also pledge ourselves to the purest and holiest love of one another. But as the spirit of that feeding on Christ which the Communion represents, ought to pervade every part of our daily life, so also should the spirit of that love which it expresses, extend through all our dealings with every one for whom Christ has died. This view of it teaches us also that all our friendships and affections should be carried on

^r 1 John iii. 23.

in Him and through Him, and that those whom we especially love should be loved in Him and for His sake, so that our greatest pain should be to see them do anything displeasing to Him. Again, it is quite inconsistent with any combination among ourselves to do evil, whether in after life to carry on worldly schemes inconsistent with His will, or in boyhood to join together for purposes of disobedience, or opposition to what is right or holy, or to attempt to turn the tide of public opinion among our companions in a wrong direction, helping to call evil good, and good evil^{*}, and to assist in the spread of feeling, which though agreeable to our own prejudices or selfish views[†],

^{*} Isaiah v. 20.

[†] "Amongst all the feelings which the Communion excited in Arnold himself, and which he wished to impart to others, none was so prominent as the sense that it was a Communion, not only with God, but with one another, and that the thoughts thus roused should act as a direct and especial counterpoise to that false communion and false companionship, which as binding one another not to good, but to evil, he believed to be the great source of mischief in the School at large.—*Stanley's Life of Arnold*, p. 125.

plainly inconsistent with a Communion amongst each other, in and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

VI. Admission to the Communion is the only outward result of our Confirmation. That we may feel as we should do with regard to it, ought therefore to be one of our principal objects in preparing for the latter ordinance. Therefore we must not fail to pray for grace that we may never deceive ourselves into a belief that we can be justified in absence from it, or in neglecting to extend its effects over our lives. The best test by which we may know whether we are really partakers of Christ in the Communion, is to try and observe whether our conduct shews that we *daily* feed upon His Body and Blood. For instance, those who do so, must feel gradually that it is more and more impossible for them to sin, not merely that it is shocking or horrible, but that they are absolutely unable to do so. In this world, indeed, they will never entirely realize so blessed a condition; but that they must be approaching to it seems plain, *or else*, how can they have part in St. John's

declaration, "He that is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he *cannot sin*, because he is born of God"?^v We may at once mention instances on an inferior scale which explain this passage, and shew that it is capable of indefinite extension. For example, every person who claims to be considered respectable, would say that it was impossible for him to steal, and many, probably a much smaller number, but still sufficient for the argument, would add that they could not tell a falsehood, not of course that they had no *power* to do so if they chose, but that their horror at the infamy of falsehood was so great that their will would not suffer them to be guilty of it. We may then well believe that, as our hearts grow more and more animated by the Spirit of Christ, it will be impossible for us to be harsh, or unkind, or ungrateful to those who love us, or to waste our time and money, or to feel listless and indifferent to holy things; till gradually one sin after another is extirpated

^v 1 John iii. 9.

within us, and we find ourselves no longer capable of committing them. Such must be some of the evidence that we are constantly united to Christ by that spiritual feeding on Him, of which the Communion is one of the chief and holiest means. We can never regard it with too much solemnity and reverence, provided we remember that God's grace alone can make His outward ordinances profitable to our souls, and regard it, not as an end, but as an instrument of obtaining an increased strength, a purer holiness, and a more extended and unselfish love both to Christ, and His Redeemed.

PRAYER FOR A WORTHY PARTICIPATION
IN CHRIST'S HOLY COMMUNION.

O ALMIGHTY God, by whose good providence I am about to be admitted to a new privilege and blessing, and therefore to a new talent for whose use I must hereafter give account, I pray Thee to make me always a *worthy communicant* in the holy Supper of

120 *Prayer for a worthy participation*

Jesus Christ. Lord, may it be a real and a living communion with Thee, our Father, and with Thy Son, our Saviour, and with the Holy Ghost, our Comforter. May it be to me an especial means of carrying on that spiritual feeding on Christ, without which I feel that I can do nothing. May it bring vividly to my mind the thought of Christ's death, filling me with shame and abhorrence for the sins which required that sacrifice, and earnest longings to grow continually more like Him here, till I see Him face to face hereafter. May it be also to me a holy bond of fellowship with all whom He has redeemed, especially with my own dearest and closest friends. As Christ by His love for His blessed Apostle St. John, gave us an example which hallows earthly friendship, so may I tenderly and deeply value those whose affection Thou hast given me. Sanctify and quicken our love for each other, and may every such feeling be established and purified in Christ. Extend the circle of my affections and interests, enable me to throw away *selfishness*, and to feel that those who live for *themselves* alone are most unfit to approach

Thy holy Table. Bless all Thy Church throughout the world, bless this School, and may the connection of all its members with each other, be carried on in the pure spirit of Christian communion and brotherhood. Holy Father, keep through Thy own Name those whom Thou hast given to Christ, that we may all be one, as Thou and He are One.^w May we be one in faith and hope and love, one in struggling against sin now, and one for ever hereafter in that glory which Thou hast promised to all who love Thee, for the sake of Thy blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

On this subject may be profitably read the following portions of Scripture: — Matt. xxvi. 17—30., Mark xiv. 12—42., Luke xxii. 7—30., xxiii., John vi., 1 Cor. xi. 20—29., xii. 4—31., xiii. We shall remember that the word *ἀγάπη*, commonly rendered *Charity*, would in English be correctly expressed by *brotherly love*.^x

^w John xvii. 11.

^x Exod. xii. should also be read. A full account of the manner in which the Paschal supper was eaten in

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VII.

1. What is the one general means by which we are kept in the spiritual fellowship to which Baptism has introduced us?

the time of our Lord, will not, however, be found in the Bible. The feast began by the distribution of small cups of wine and water, which every one drank, after thanks had been given by the master of the house, or president of the feast, in these words, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who hast created the fruit of the vine." The persons present then washed their hands, and the supper was placed upon the table. The master first ate a small portion of the bitter herbs, and explained the circumstances attending the deliverance from Egypt, which the feast celebrated. The company then sang the 113th and 114th Psalms ("Praise the Lord, ye servants," and "When Israel came out of Egypt"). Some other ceremonies followed, after which the master broke the unleavened bread, gave thanks, dipped it with some of the bitter herbs into the sauce, gave a portion to some person near him, and also ate of it himself, in which he was followed by all the others. (Cf. John, xiii. 26.) The Paschal lamb was then eaten, and afterwards the cup of blessing drunk, over which was pronounced the blessing for the whole. At the end of the feast the 115th, 116th, 117th, and 118th Psalms were sung, and these probably composed the hymn, which we read that our Lord and his disciples sang before they went to the Mount of Olives, *Matt. xxvi. 30.*

2. By what metaphors is this illustrated in the Bible?

3. What is the connection between the miracle of the five barley loaves and the rest of John vi.?

4. What is meant in John vi. by eating Christ's Body and drinking His Blood? Show from the chapter itself that no natural eating is intended.

5. What was commemorated in the Passover?

6. How is the Lord's Supper connected with the Passover?

7. Explain, *I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine, till I drink it new with you in the kingdom of God.*

8. How do we partake of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper?

9. Can we feed on Christ in any other way except by means of this Sacrament?

10. What should be said to a person who considers himself too sinful to go to the Lord's Supper?

11. Why is it sinful not to go to the Lord's Supper?

12. What do we learn from considering the Lord's Supper a Communion?

13. With what kind of conduct is such a view of it especially inconsistent?

14. Explain the passage, "*he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*"

15. What should be our object in partaking of the Lord's Supper?

16. What may we suppose was the hymn which our Lord and His disciples sang before they went to the Mount of Olives, on the night in which He was betrayed?

CHAPTER VIII.

REASONS FOR BELIEVING

I. AMONG St. Peter's directions to the Church, occurs the precept, that we be ready always to give a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and lowliness. It seems right, then, that at the Confirmation, those who are about to profess publicly that the Christian religion is the guide of their whole lives, and the foundation of all their best hopes, both for this world and the next, should have some distinct and satisfactory evidence upon which their belief is founded. It is, however

II. The foundation of our belief in this revelation must be a sense that it was needed, and must rest upon a knowledge of the condition of our own hearts. It is scarcely possible for any one who seriously looks into his own character to avoid confessing two things, a great amount of sinfulness and evil inclinations, and a vast difficulty in overcoming them. The best of us must be conscious of many such bad qualities as selfishness, vanity, pride, ill-temper, indolence, weakness, which the natural voice of conscience assures us to be wrong, and not only so, but they must also feel that, when they try to conquer these propensities, they fail most miserably in every attempt to do so. If we do not acknowledge this, then no doubt we shall be ill prepared to receive any evidences of the truth of Christianity. If we do allow it, we shall turn with eagerness to the only conceivable system which offers to us any means of escape from such a painful state of mind.

III. How Christianity offers us this escape has been explained in former chapters of this book. But in estimating the necessity of such a revelation, two things seem wanted to

prove our point: not only the internal argument for that necessity, resulting from the condition to which we feel that we should be reduced without it, and which we have already considered, but also the historic argument, which may be deduced from the state which the world had reached before the revelation was given.

IV. With regard, then, to the second these, the condition of knowledge and morality which prevailed in the world when Christ came to it, we know that the educated and thinking part of mankind never considered necessary that a religion proposed for public acceptance should be true. Starting from the idea of a God, in whose existence most of them fully believed, they joined to it a mixture of poetry, fiction, and allegory; might most readily deceive the people, make an impression upon those whose guides were their senses. Hence idolatry, because by means of it the could be brought visibly before the people's eyes; hence the low and degrading *ancient mythology*, all of which help *bring the objects of worship down*

level of the worshippers' understanding. All this was encouraged by philosophers and rulers, on the principles avowed by Polybius, "As far as it serves to maintain piety, we must pardon some historians, if they do relate miraculous stories,"^z and again, "if a state could be formed wholly of wise men, perhaps such means would not be requisite."^a Hence the following obvious consequence ensued: the more enlightened and educated the people became, the more convinced they were of the falsehood of religion; and from rejecting the popular belief on such subjects, they naturally threw away with it the truth which that belief obscured and stifled, namely, that there exists an Almighty Being, who created and governs the earth, and to whom we are all responsible. In this respect the heathen world was in a directly contrary position to the Christian. An increase in wisdom and knowledge, if joined with purity of heart and humility, can only strengthen our faith in the Christian Revelation; whereas, on the contrary, it could do nothing but diminish

^z xvi. 12.^a vi. 58.

the popular belief in the system of Paganism. What state of morality followed from the condition of public opinion, it is not difficult for any one moderately acquainted with classical literature to perceive. Let him take for an example the writing of Horace as a specimen of the thoughts and feelings of an educated Roman who lived just before the coming of our Lord. The unblushing profligacy, the gross selfishness, the utter indifference to any thing really lofty and virtuous which distinguish his Satires and Epistles, are the characteristics, not of him only, but of the whole spirit and feeling of the time. Again, the general state of morality among the people of that age, is described in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, every word of which is accurately borne out by historical evidence.

V. Such are the two grounds of necessity on which we say that the arrival of a divine message was to be expected by mankind. First, every man, individually, must be agitated by the question, How shall I, so unclean and polluted as I am, approach the God, of whose existence and holiness

my reason convinces me, to whom I feel responsible, and whose commands my conscience tells me that I am violating? Till this question is answered, a person must either be miserable, or else must try to stifle the thoughts which it suggests, by plunging into vice. And, secondly, when Christ came, the world had fallen into such a state of horrible wickedness, that unless God had interfered to check it, He must surely have destroyed it. Those who believe in His existence at all, can hardly imagine that such a state of things as that which St. Paul describes in the passage just quoted, could have been allowed to continue. To remedy these evils Christianity claims to have been sent by God, and for all such difficulties it proposes a solution. However imperfectly it has yet done its work; however much of awful wickedness still exists among us, we cannot doubt that it has effected great improvement, and that the world is much better than it was.

VI. But no person would be justified in embracing the Christian religion, merely because his conscience was satisfied that both

he himself, and mankind generally, are in need of a cure from the disease of sin, and that it appears to furnish one. His conscience and understanding must also both be convinced that Christianity prescribes *the* cure of which God Himself is the Author, and that therefore it is a Revelation from Him to mankind.

VII. As to the *conscience*. There is no doubt that the scheme of religion which Christ has made known to us does completely satisfy the three great wants of our nature ; a practical knowledge of God and of His will and relation to us, a means of restoration to His favour, and of passing our lives upon earth according to His commandments. For it starts by declaring authoritatively that the doctrines of man's responsibility to God, of the future judgment, and of an eternal existence to be spent either in happiness or misery according to our conduct here, are unquestionably true. It assumes as a fact, corruption and sinfulness of our nature which our inmost feelings assure us *further tells us*, what we did not know *Man was not created sinful, but good*


he has fallen by his own fault, but still that he can be restored. And it proposes a scheme of procuring him pardon, and of bringing him to holiness here, and happiness hereafter, which is quite sufficient to accomplish these objects, supposing that God has made the promises which the scheme involves, while there is a strong presumption that He has made them, from the perfect wisdom and love which they imply. Again, the morality which Christianity teaches is of a far loftier and purer tone than that which any human being had ever thought of inculcating, and in its code there is not a single flaw to dissatisfy the most enlightened conscience. Its precepts are at once completely opposed to prevalent opinions and practices, and sufficient to satisfy our highest aspirations after perfect goodness. All this is not only a strong presumption in favour of Christianity, but is the kind of evidence to which a believer will most frequently turn to refresh and quicken his faith. Still, the *understanding* must also be satisfied, as well as the conscience, and therefore such external evidences as the following must not be neglected.

VIII. The introduction of Christ's religion into the world is a fact which must be accounted for in some way. Nor is this all, but it is certainly also the most extraordinary fact which the world has known. If we only consider that as soon as the Gospel was preached, people in all parts of the known world voluntarily renounced, not merely the religions in which they had been brought up, but their whole mode of life, gave up many evil habits which had been tolerated by Paganism, and submitted to ridicule, persecution, and death, for the sake of a new doctrine, we cannot deny that here is a very wonderful fact which has to be accounted for. But this becomes still more striking, when we remember that the change has gone on constantly spreading more and more widely, that at present the whole face of society is influenced by the precepts of a person who was born apparently as a carpenter's son, in the remote province of Judæa; that His precepts established as the law of the greater part of the civilised world, and that His institutions are impressed upon the constitutions of most powerful empires. Ever since His

pearance on earth, all great improvements in society, such as the abolition of gladiators' shows and of slavery, have been effected by persons professing obedience to Him, and eager *on that account* to abolish everything which, by causing misery to any class of society, was displeasing to Him. For eighteen hundred years, good men have constantly declared that His word was their only consolation in affliction, and more than made up to them for every earthly loss and trial. All this, too, has been effected by moral means, that is, by persuasion, and appeals to evidence. Of the introduction of Paganism into the world, we know only that its various superstitions crept in by little and little, as men wandered from the original revelation of one true God, but there was never any formal systematic preaching of its doctrines. Mahometanism was indeed introduced in times with whose history we are acquainted, but the causes of its influence can be distinctly traced. It first spread in Arabia, because it was a restoration of the worship of one God, and of something like a code of morality to a people among whom the most revolting super-

stitutions were flourishing, and of whom therefore the better part, at least, were ready and desirous for so valuable a change in their habits; and its subsequent propagation was carried on entirely by the sword. Its professors were brave warriors, who subdued extensive regions, and forced those whom they conquered to acknowledge Mahomet as the prophet of God, on pain of death, or bondage. But in the case of Christianity this was so far from being the manner of its propagation, that the Roman empire, where it was first established, was conquered by heathen barbarians, who embraced the religion of those whom they had vanquished. So that Christianity has made its way only by the force of its own inherent excellence, and it would undoubtedly be most difficult to account for the changes which it has produced on the face of the earth, except by the belief that it is truly God's message to mankind.

IX. But for a revelation to be acknowledged as coming from God, it ought to contain indisputable marks both of power and *goodness*. If there are signs of goodness *without* power, it cannot be proved to be



more than human ; if there is superhuman power without goodness, it must have been the work of some spirit or strange unseen influence, but cannot be proved to be divine. Where power and goodness are combined, there is God. No one will dispute that almighty power is displayed in the miracles of Christ, nor that infinite goodness is implied by the teaching of Christ. Above all, power and goodness both are eminently combined in His Resurrection, by which, as it were, He unlocked to mankind the gates of eternity, showed them that for the holy there is life beyond the grave, and that He is a Saviour powerful enough to admit them to it. Therefore, if the facts which the Gospels relate are true, Christianity does come from God, and is that unfailing remedy for the evils of the human race, which we have shown to be necessary.

X. We have now seen that Christianity was propagated by persuasion and moral means, that it has produced wonderful effects, that it contains marks of superhuman power and goodness. All this is strong presumptive evidence in its favour. Let us

now turn to the direct proof that the facts on which it is founded really occurred. The New Testament contains the account of Christ's miracles, and especially of that crowning one of the Resurrection, on which fact we find that the Apostles principally rested their preaching, and the evidence of their religion. For, before His death, Christ had himself declared that He should rise again, and had chosen this fact of the Resurrection as the especial sign that He was sent by God. This was that sign of the prophet Jonah, which He had told the Jews was the only one to be granted to them.^b Now, if the facts stated in any one of the gospels be correctly recorded, it is impossible to doubt that He really died and really rose again. The centurion and the soldiers examined His body, and found it dead, and thrust into His side that formidable weapon, the Roman pilum, whose shaft was four inches wide, making thereby a wound large enough to admit a man's hand. After this, the body was wrapped with linen clothes, and buried *in a cavern*, yet within forty-eight hours He

^b Matt. xii. 39, 40.

appeared in perfect strength and vigour, and declared to His disciples that His mission was now accomplished. Those who were to promulgate this story, saw Him, felt Him, ate with Him, and could not possibly be deceived. As soon as this miraculous story was first promulgated, persecutions arose against its preachers (as had been foretold by the Author of the new religion^c), but so far from yielding to these persecutions, they one and all expressed their readiness to die rather than deny one single point which they asserted, and not only so, but in some cases actually were put to death. These sufferings were borne, not in support of opinions, but of *facts*. The distinction is important. A man might consent to be put to death rather than give up an opinion, without thereby furnishing any argument that the opinion was actually true, though no doubt making it probable that he was himself convinced of its truth. But we never heard of men consenting to die, rather than deny that they had seen an event which they perfectly well knew had never happened ; and the circumstance that

^c Matt. x. 22.

any one did so would be a most overwhelming proof that it had taken place.

XI. Further, the historical facts of Christianity, that is, our Lord's miracles, death, and resurrection, together with the first fortunes of the Church after His ascension, and the doctrines which He taught, are described principally by two persons professing to have been eye-witnesses of the transactions which they relate, St. John, for the period before the Ascension, and St. Paul, for that which follows it. We have, indeed, other accounts of these facts, but the writings of St. Paul and St. John are worthy of especial notice, when we are treating of the subject of evidences, because there are no compositions extant which bear more strong internal marks of genuineness than these. With regard to the Gospel of St. John, the accurate acquaintance which the writer shows with the Jewish country and people, prove him to have been a native of Palestine, while the language in which it is written, Greek, with a great mixture of *oriental* and particularly Hebrew elements, is *characteristic* of an author to whom Greek *was not a natural language, but acquired;*

just as we know that St. John, after leaving Judæa, lived among the Greeks of Asia Minor. The intimate acquaintance shown with the innermost mind and feelings of our Lord, the living reality of the story, the occasional minuteness of detail, all prove the author not only to have been an eye-witness, but one honoured with Christ's close familiarity and affection. And as to St. Paul's letters, the remarkable and most clearly undesigned coincidence of allusions in them, with the facts detailed to us in the independent history of the Acts, is an evidence perfectly irresistible. The writings of both these Apostles possess, in common with the other books of the New Testament, those characteristics of simplicity, of an absence of all desire to exaggerate, or to produce rhetorical effect by laboured descriptions, of calmness, and of humility, which are most unusual, to say the least, in any writings, except such as are founded on certain truth. Even the greatest of all proofs of the blind wickedness of the Jews, their preference of the murderer Barabbas to the meek and holy *Jesus*, is related by the evangelist with per-

fect simplicity, calmness, and dignity. proof of this, take St. John's short na of the transaction: "Pilate saith, will I release unto you the King of the Then cried they all again, saying, 'N man, but Barabbas.' Now Barabbas robber." Again, the morality inculc all these books is so pure and divine, is impossible to suppose their autho postors. For to do so, would be to i that falsehood is consistent with the possible goodness. But that they postors is implied in the belief tha writings are false, since they assert external facts, and do not base their as many enthusiasts have done, on the tempered workings of their own mind

XII. This wonderful history of life, and death, and resurrection, handed down to us under circumstance leave no doubt that the account w possess is the same as that which has from the beginning. Of the various collected together in the volume of the *tures*, different parts are quoted or to by a series of authors, beginnin

small extent, with the contemporaries of the Apostles, and continued, in increasing frequency, through their successors to the present day; they are quoted always with respect, as books containing God's communications to mankind; they have been continually used in all Christian assemblies; commentaries have been written on them, translations made of them, and till the art of printing was invented, manuscript copies carefully taken in all parts of the known world. They have been attacked by infidels, as books claiming divine inspiration; and therefore the evidence alike of friends and foes makes it manifest that they are the very writings which appeared in the first century of the Christian æra, professing to contain the Revelation of God's will to man.

XIII. Moreover, throughout the New Testament we find that both Christ and His Apostles refer to the Old Testament as God's book, as containing the record of His earlier revelation, and several distinct prophecies of the new religion which was now to claim obedience from mankind. We turn to the Old Testament and find that these prophecies,

namely, that a great blessing to all the world should spring from the race of Abraham, that the law of Moses should yield to a new religion, and that the promised Saviour should be despised and rejected, were accurately fulfilled in the person of Christ. On Christ's words and actions, therefore, we found, in a great measure, our acceptance of the Old Testament^d, and, according to His own directions, recognise Him as the object of its whole history, thereby throwing light on its marvellous details, and on their difference from all other events. For believing that God came into the world to save it, we cannot be surprised if from the beginning a preparation was going on for so astonishing a wonder, by the election of a special people

^d This method of arguing is of course only to be employed when we are proving the truth of Christianity to a Gentile. In the case of a Jew we should begin from the other end, and confirm the truth of the New Testament by its dependence on the Old. To all of us, however, the fact of the close agreement of the prophecies with the events related in the *Gospels* and *Acts* must be in a strong support to our *faith* in both Testaments.

to receive, in the first instance, the universal Redeemer.

XIV. In this respect that characteristic of unity of design, which pervades the whole Bible, is no trifling proof of its truth. The Old Testament consists of thirty-nine, and the New of twenty-seven, different writings, yet in all of these there is one purpose manifest,—to give an account of the restoration of man to God, through Christ. The sacred writers do not turn aside from this their simple moral object to encroach on the legitimate province of the human intellect, and to anticipate any of the discoveries of philosophy, by professing to reveal points of astronomy, geology, or any other physical science; their language in such matters (when they are obliged to notice them incidentally), is merely in harmony with the popular belief of the age. Nor do they supersede the researches of the historian by describing the fortunes of the great empires of the world, Egypt, or Assyria, or Persia, or Macedon, or Rome. As to the first origin of the world, the Bible only assures us of the *moral* fact that it has a personal Creator, who, as the

Father, is also the Sovereign of mankind. It records the Fall of man, and immediately after gives the promise of his Restoration. It teaches us at once how deeply God abhors sin, by recording the destruction of the inhabited world by water for the wickedness of its inhabitants. After this it confines itself to the history of one of the smallest and most despised races of mankind, because from them the Deliverer was to spring, who should redeem man from sin and the punishment due to it. The laws and customs of this race are minutely described, all being designed to bring men to a consciousness of their sinfulness, and need of a Saviour, and also (particularly by the institution of sacrifice) to teach them that something more than repentance is necessary to atone for sin. Thus the whole of the Old Testament is the preparation for the coming of Him, whose life, and death, and teaching, together with the early fortunes of the society which he instituted, are recorded in the New. This surely may convince us that the one spirit which *animates* all these writings, the productions of such various ages and characters, was

breathed into them by one superintending Mind ; for else how can it be that the works of the lawgiver, the historian, the grave moralist, the lyric poet, the prophet, the fisherman of the lake of Galilee, the Pharisee brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, are all confined to one object, all inculcate one truth, all present to us one picture,—and that writings scattered over a period of sixteen hundred years, all unite into one mighty and everliving whole ?* How different is this simplicity and majestic unity from the vain cosmogonies and legends, and fond inventions of the Greek, or Mahometan, or still more of the Hindoo religion ! How grandly does the picture of God, revealed to us in the Bible, harmonise with that which we gain from contemplating the natural world, where the provisions for our happiness, which abound on every side of us, suggest to us the belief in a kind and loving Father ; while the existence of disease and misery not only shows that God abhors wickedness (which they almost invariably accompany), but also leads

* See the Sermon “ *Variety in Unity*,” in Dr. Tait’s “ *Suggestions to the Theological Student*.”

us to look forward with longing hope to a purer state of being, where the inequalities of this world will be rectified, and where He will wipe away all tears from our eyes !

XV. We have now pointed out the kind of arguments which prove :

(a.) That a Revelation was necessary.

(b.) That if Christianity be true, it supplies all the wants which made the Revelation necessary.

(c.) That the effects of Christianity on the world have been such as strongly to support our belief in its divine origin.

(d.) That if the facts of Christianity be truly stated, they contain indisputable marks of God's authorship.

(e.) That the facts of Christianity are supported by the strongest evidence, external and internal.

(f.) That the writings which we now possess containing these facts, are genuine depositaries of the original story.

(g.) That belief in Christianity involves our accepting the Old Testament as God's *book also*.

(h.) That there is in the whole Bible such

a simplicity and unity of design, and such a harmony with the knowledge of God which we may derive from the natural world, as to afford us ample grounds for believing that He guided its various authors.

XVI. It is not, of course, intended that the above sketch should be supposed to furnish a system of Christian evidence. In particular, it would be quite impossible here to enter into a detailed defence of the authenticity of the separate books of the New Testament, or to do more than state, quite generally, the kind of testimony on which it rests. The proofs that Christianity is divine have been collected by many writers, whose works must be consulted by those who desire to pursue the subject. How satisfactory the result of their inquiries has been, is stated by Dr. Arnold, in the following passage :^f — “The evidence of our Lord’s life and death and resurrection, has often been shown to be satisfactory ; it is good, according to the common rules of distinguishing good evidence from bad. Thousands and ten thousands of persons have gone through it piece

^f Sermons, vol. v. Sermon 2.

by piece, as carefully as ever judge summed up on a most important cause; I have myself done it many times over; not to persuade others, but to satisfy myself. I have been used for many years to study the history of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them; and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind, which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair enquirer, than the great sign which God has given us, that Christ died, and rose again from the dead."

XVII. But the real proof that Christianity is true, is not intellectual, but moral. The great, the convincing evidence, which must abide with us in every difficulty and doubt, suggested to our understanding, is the evidence of Christ's Spirit, influencing and purifying our hearts. For suppose that a person, satisfied intellectually of the truth of Christianity by such arguments as those of which a very imperfect sketch is here given, begins steadily and consistently to act upon its precepts. He finds all that it professes to do for him gradually fulfilled. He does become

better and holier, he sees how he may conquer sin; every day convinces him more and more that he has found the remedy which he wanted. No doubt he may, from time to time, hear of difficulties connected with the subject which he cannot exactly answer. But he sees no difficulty half so great, as the belief that God should have left His creatures in utter wickedness, without any adequate means of knowing His will, because that is repugnant to those two ideas of love and justice, which form an essential part of his conception of God. He sees too that if he does not believe in Christianity, there is no other pretended revelation which has, intellectually, the slightest claim to his belief, while in moral respects all others are quite unworthy of the pure source from which they profess to emanate. He feels that faith in Christianity leads to holiness, and unbelief to sin. If therefore it is false, truth and falsehood change natures, for Christianity which is false, makes men good, and some other form of belief, which is true, makes them bad. This conclusion is so shocking to the reason and the conscience, that nothing further need be said in refutation of it.

A PRAYER FOR INCREASED DEVOTION TO
CHRIST'S RELIGION.

O LORD and heavenly Father, who hast given to lost and ruined man the infinite blessing of Christ's religion, enable me to love it and value it daily more and more, and ever to walk worthy of so mighty a redemption. Forgive me, through Him, for all my sins. Quicken the tenderness of my conscience, that I may know how much I need a Saviour; humble and enlighten my understanding that I may thankfully accept all that He has revealed to me; and add such fresh vigour to my faith, that it may influence all my life, and guide me in every difficulty. Lord, extend every where the knowledge of Christ's salvation. Help and guide all who are in darkness, and especially confirm and strengthen the belief of all for whom I am bound to pray; of my relations, friends, teachers, and companions. For all that they have done amiss, O Lord, pardon them; and pardon me also: forgive us our *sins*, and do not forsake us, but love and bless *us*, and give us rest, and bring us to a con-

sistent love of holiness and of Thee. Forgive me, especially, that I have heard of Thee so often, and yet know Thee so little: forgive all my carelessness and indifference, and rouse me at last to feel practically that without Christ I can do nothing. Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief; remove from me all doubts and snares, and preserve me from the sin of leading a life contrary to my faith and my convictions, and unworthy of Him whose Name I bear. Hear me, I beseech Thee, O holy and most merciful Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, my Saviour. Amen.

It is difficult to name any parts of the Scripture which especially illustrate the evidences of Christianity, since there is hardly any part of the New Testament, which does not carry with it its own testimony; and the characteristics of simplicity, of an entire absence of any attempt at effect, and others which have been cursorily noticed above, belong to the whole of it. It would be well, however, in connection with this subject, to read the last two chapters of St. John's Gospel, of which it has

been said, that “no one who pretends to be a judge of human character can doubt the perfect honesty of this narrative;”^s the account of the manner in which the chief priests accurately enquired into one of our Lord’s miracles in John v. and the story of the raising of Lazarus and its consequences, John xi. and xii. 1—11; also the speeches in the Acts, ii. 14, &c., iii. 12, &c., iv. 8, &c., vii., xiii. 14, &c. xxvi. To these passages may be added our Lord’s own prophecies in Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xix.: and the principal prophecies concerning Christ and the Gospel in the Old Testament, as Gen. iii. 14, 15., xxii. 18., which foretell that man should be redeemed, and that the Redeemer should be a descendant of Abraham; Jer. xxxi. 31, &c., xxxii. 40, &c., xxxiii. 14, &c., Ezek. xxxvii. 26, &c., Micah iv., which announces that the Jewish religion was to give place to another Isaiah lii., liii., which speak of a suffering Messiah; Isaiah ix., xi., lx., Ezek. xxxiv. 2^d &c., which tell of the kingdom to be established by Him; Isaiah xxxv. 5., *describes His ministry, and should be*

^s Arnold, vol. iii. Sermon 12.

pared with Luke vii. 22., and iv. 16—21.; and lastly, Psalm xvi., which proclaims His Resurrection.^h

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VIII.

1. For what reasons was a Revelation from God necessary?

2. What view of religion was taken by educated men of antiquity?

3. How does Christianity commend itself to the conscience?

4. What were the chief effects of Christianity on society when first propagated?

5. Mention any great improvements in society effected by Christianity.

6. What testimony has been borne to the power of Christianity by good men?

7. Compare the progress of Christianity with that of Mahometanism.

8. What two signs of divine origin ought a Revelation to bear? Shew that one is insufficient without the other.

^h As a small but very clear and able compendium of evidences, and admirably suited for young persons, may be recommended "*Lessons on the Truth of Christianity*," published by the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland.

154 *Questions on Chapter VIII.*

9. In which of the great facts of Redemption are these two signs most conspicuous?

10. Shew the peculiar importance of the Resurrection as an evidence of Christianity.

11. Shew that, if the Gospel narrative is true, we cannot doubt the reality of Christ's death and Resurrection.

12. What circumstance makes the sufferings of the early Christians a strong argument for the truth of Christianity?

13. Which of the New Testament Scriptures are of especial importance as evidences of Christianity, and why?

14. What internal evidence makes it impossible to believe that the Apostles were impostors?

15. Why are we justified in believing that our account of the origin of Christianity is the same as that which has existed from the first?

16. On what do we chiefly ground our acceptance of the Old Testament?

17. What evidence does the Old Testament furnish to the truth of the New?

18. How does Christ's coming justify and explain God's dealing with the Jews?

19. Shew that one object pervades all the Bible, and deduce from this an argument for its truth.

20. Shew that the teaching of the Bible harmonizes with the knowledge of God which we may gather from the natural world.

21. Enumerate the principal facts which it is necessary to prove, in order to establish the truth of Christianity.

22. What evidence of its truth will a person receive who begins to act upon its precepts?

23. What incredible consequence is involved in our rejecting Christianity?

CONCLUSION.

IT now only remains to address a few concluding words to those who have read this book as a preparation for their Confirmation, and feel desirous to avail themselves of the opportunity which that ordinance affords them, of leading lives more distinctly and avowedly religious than they have yet done. The principal means which they must use, to maintain within themselves an abiding consciousness of duty, and feeling of faith and love to Him who is the Captain of their salvation, have been noticed incidentally already. A few of the most important may, however, be repeated here.

I. Private prayer, a regular participation in Christ's Holy Communion, and reading of Scripture, with a diligent use of the public services and instructions to which we are

called, considered not as forms, but as important means of grace, will occupy first place among them.

II. The regular separation of Su from ordinary employments, to the inc of our religious knowledge, and elevati our religious feelings, and to that kin quiet intercourse with others, which duces the softening influences of affe and goodwill.

III. Reading religious books of a tical and devotional character, especiall lives and deaths of good Christians c ages. Examples of such books must b commended to each person by his own mediate relations or friends, or teachers.

IV. Cultivating the intimate societ such friends only as we plainly see are an to lead a holy life.

V. Setting apart special times for exa ing the state of the heart, and the pro made in holiness and the love of Under this head would fall a practic commended by Archbishop Whateley *consecrating* the anniversary of our *firmation* as a kind of private relig

tival, on which we should seriously and anxiously enquire into our condition in God's sight, pray with renewed earnestness for His grace and help, and offer up our humble thanksgiving for all His mercies to us.

VI. The conscientious devotion, according to each person's means, of a part of the money which he has for his private expenses, to the relief of the poor, and such other good objects as those whose opinions he respects will point out to him. This is, of course, a positive duty, absolutely commanded in Scripture on other grounds; but it is suggested in this place, not on account of the benefits which others may receive from these alms, but as a help to destroy selfishness and indifference in the heart of the giver.

VII. Where it is possible, the endeavour to carry on some kind and friendly intercourse with the poor.¹ This is of course beset with difficulties, and may perhaps be scarcely practicable for a boy while he is at school. But any one who lives at home, or a schoolboy during the holidays, may find means, with the advice and concurrence of

¹ See Arnold's Sermons, vol. ii. Sermon 32.

his parents, to carry on, at least, to some small extent, a practice so beneficial to himself. The object of course should only be to find opportunities of shewing them kindness, and relieving their wants, so as to produce in the heart a sense of deeper gratitude and responsibility towards the heavenly Father, from whose gift proceeds all that temporal happiness and comfort which He has, for wise reasons, denied to so many of His children; and to minister to Christ Himself,* by doing good to His poorer brethren, whom He has so earnestly consigned to our love and care, and to whose friends and helpers He has promised so especial a blessing. Generally speaking, the only kind of religious teaching which a young person can properly undertake towards the poor, is that which he may be enabled to give to some of the children at a Sunday school, of course under proper direction and control. This also may, by God's blessing, be a great means of grace and religious improvement to himself, and therefore must, like all other practices from which any spiritual benefit to ourselves

* Matt. xxv. 35, &c.

or others is expected, be accompanied by sincere and humble prayer.

VIII. But after all, the great thing is for us to endeavour, by communion with God, and by habituating ourselves to serious thought, so to discipline and guide our minds, that their prevailing feeling may gradually become the conviction, that we are placed on earth for higher objects than our own gratification, and that the work of our lives must be, the endeavour to gain the blessing of holiness here, and everlasting glory hereafter. With this must be joined, an abiding sense of our own weakness, and of God's perfect strength, given to us for Christ's sake, by the operation of His Holy Spirit. We must "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling," deriving our greatest confidence of success from the fact, "that it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure."¹ If we set about our work in such a spirit, devoting every day to God, trying to let our first morning thought be a silent entreaty for His blessing, and our last evening medi-

¹ Phil. ii. 12, 13.

tation an enquiry how we have spent the day, we shall soon find our temptations weaker, our holiness purer, our love more warm, and our faith more bright and undoubting. It is in this way that sin has ever been subdued, by mortifying the corrupt affections, and trying to raise the hearts and desires from earth to heaven. If, then, there be any truth in the Gospel of Christ, if the saints and holy men of all times have not spent their lives in the pursuit of a vain shadow, disquieting themselves in vain ; if their patience, and meekness, and purity, and zeal, and love, and faith, were based on anything firmer than a fancy and a dream ; surely we shall constantly renew, with increased earnestness, the baptismal dedication of our hearts to God, praying Him now by His Spirit, to quicken and raise to holiness our spirits ; as He will hereafter by the same Spirit, call forth to a new existence our mortal bodies, summon us to give an account of all things which we have done in this world, and decide our everlasting condition by the surest and most unerring judgment. At the same time we shall constantly

seek to advance in the humility which teaches us that in the awful day of that judgment, our own works cannot stand for a moment in the sight of Him who requires, not imperfect holiness, but purity like His own; and therefore shall seek to cleave more and more to that Saviour for whose sake alone we shall be forgiven and accepted by God. May this lesson be taught to every one who uses this book, by the Spirit of the same Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord!

THE END.

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the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) in 1992.

As a result of the 1992 JAMA article, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) issued a joint statement in 1993, which was published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* (JAACAP). The statement was signed by the presidents of both organizations and stated that the term "Munchausen's syndrome" was "not a valid clinical entity."

The statement also stated that the term "factitious disorder" was "the preferred term for the condition formerly known as Munchausen's syndrome." The statement further stated that the term "factitious disorder" was "not a new term" and that it had been used in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) since 1952.

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